

The Acting CHAIR. The Committee will rise informally to receive a message.

The Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SMITH of Nebraska) assumed the chair.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Kaitlyn Roberts, one of his secretaries.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Committee will resume its sitting.

#### LOWER ENERGY COSTS ACT

The Committee resumed its sitting.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Chair, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. CARL), another member of the House Natural Resources Committee.

Mr. CARL. Madam Chair, I rise today in support of H.R. 1, the Lower Energy Costs Act.

I did not bring any fancy charts. I don't have any nice pictures for you to look at. But what I do want you to look through is my heart and my mind.

In 64 years of living, I have spent the last 2 years working with the other side of the aisle, watching them systematically take this country apart when it comes to our natural resources. Enough is enough.

You want me to prove it?

We just won the House. We have the majority now. We have a chance to change what is going on today.

Let me tell you what is going on. All we hear is: The sky is falling. The sky is falling.

I encourage people to get out from wherever you are hiding and look around, smell the fresh air, look at the sun shining. It is not falling.

It is like dealing with a bunch of guys practicing magic. They want you to watch one hand while they are picking your pocket with the other hand. I have had enough. I have had enough, and I think it is time we talk about it.

They have systematically shut down our copper mine, the largest copper mine on the North American Continent and in the world, so I understand. They have shut it down.

Who are we buying copper from now? China, a communist country we are buying all that copper from.

Excuse me. I have got a problem with that.

I look at my oil refineries and my gas refineries down in Alabama and outside of Alabama.

Those gas refineries, do you know what they are refining?

Venezuelan oil. Not American oil. Venezuelan oil from a communist country.

Is there a pattern here that we should be looking at? Is there a pattern of a communist regime here that we just keep getting pushed on us?

I just spent 2 weeks in Central America trying to figure out how we can keep a communist country from taking

over Central America. But we have this side of the aisle that wants to tell us the sky is falling. I refuse to believe it, and I refuse to give it up.

Voters made their voice heard last November when they sent Republicans to Congress to put an end to Democrats' anti-American agenda.

Americans are paying 40 percent more for their gas since President Biden took office, and the Democrats have done nothing but add fuel to the fire to raise that price by shutting down our drilling and shutting down our mines.

On the other hand, House Republicans this week are moving forward with the Lower Energy Costs Act, this act, which has two primary objectives here: Increasing American energy production—not communist—and to strip away the rules and regulations that make it harder for American infrastructure to grow this economy.

□ 1600

I am especially proud of this bill because I worked on part of it. The Unleashing American Energy Act is included in this package. My bill fights back on the Biden administration's war on our domestic energy production by mandating oil and gas lease sales each year in the Gulf of Mexico and off the coast of Alaska.

Let me remind my friends, most of these are union jobs. Unions are supporting you. Remember that. These are union jobs you are voting against.

House Republicans have a solution right here in this lower energy costs bill. I encourage all of my friends to vote on this bill. This bill will help end our reliance on these foreign countries—these foreign Communist countries. We need to reflect on that as we vote.

Madam Chair, if you support the Communist Party, vote "no" on this bill. If you support American jobs and if you support American families, vote "yes" on H.R. 1.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Chair, if you believe in climate change and the climate crisis, vote "no" on this legislation. If you believe that regardless of ideology, if you believe that climate change is real and must be dealt with, vote "no" on this legislation because it does nothing to deal with that real threat in front of us.

Madam Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. CROCKETT).

Ms. CROCKETT. Madam Chair, I rise today in opposition of H.R. 1, the misleadingly named Lower Energy Costs Act.

I had everything written down of what I was going to say, but then I started hearing some other stuff. I decided that what I wanted to talk about is a few things.

Number one: I need the American people to understand that H.R. 1 means that this is the first bill. This is the bill that the party in power thinks matters most. This is where their pri-

orities lie. When you look at what the Democrats did, they decided that they wanted to stand for democracy after there were those that wanted to try to tear our democracy apart.

I have to rest here for a second, simply because at the time I was a Texas House Representative who had to flee my State because of voting rights. I urged this House to pass H.R. 1, simply because we were trying to make sure that people would not cheat in these elections.

Just because you have control of the House doesn't mean that you didn't take your time and gerrymander these lines because we know that is exactly what happened. That is the only reason that the Democrats are not currently in control. The reason that this margin is so tight is because our policies stand for the people.

Let's talk about this bill. This bill is about putting people over polluters. If we want to talk about what the Republicans do when they are in control and they get to decide about power, let's talk about the State of Texas.

Let's talk about the fact that we have left the State of Texas in the dark over and over. It was interesting to look across the aisle and see a sign that said that the Republicans will keep the lights on. Well, go talk to Texas and find out if the lights have been kept on or if we have been left in the dark.

We are consistently left in the dark because there is this idea that if we just go ahead and get rid of regulations that everything will work out. Unfortunately, it has not worked out. It has not worked out to the tune of us actually losing lives in the State of Texas.

That is why we are here standing before you, making sure that we are fighting for actual lower bills when it comes to our everyday working families that are already squeezed by inflation.

We heard Mr. Speaker talk about the fact that he wanted to make sure there was more money in people's pockets for medicine. When it came down to voting for the Inflation Reduction Act, I don't believe that there were too many Republicans that were voting for that—to make sure we could lower the cost of insulin—just to make sure that the RECORD is clear—if we want to make sure we are putting more money into their pockets.

House Republicans want to lower energy costs for big polluters, plain and simple. That means somebody foots the bill and somebody pays the price. Once again, go ask my constituents in Texas. We are the ones who are footing the bill for the failures of our grid over and over and over.

My constituents tend to be Black and Brown, mostly, and they tend to be those that are disproportionately living in polluted communities today, that are only able to breathe because of the scant environmental protections we actually have. They are being asked

to not only endure the brunt of pollution, but also endure the bill of pollution. I will not and I cannot stand for it.

When this bill guts Clean Air Act safeguards to let polluters earn profits faster by curtailing the already paltry public comment period, my constituents foot the bill.

The Acting CHAIR (Ms. MACE). The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Chair, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. CROCKETT. Madam Chair, my constituents foot the bill with increased rates of lung disease, healthcare costs, and child mortality. Who foots the bill for these lower energy costs? Not the polluters.

It is the little girl on the playground in my district who is inhaling toxic fumes from the concrete plant right next to her school. That little girl will be scarred for the rest of her life with an increased risk of asthma, bronchitis, and cancer just so polluters can make a quick buck.

You know what makes it crystal clear who the supporters really care about? The Lower Energy Costs Act repeals the home electric rebate program passed last year to reimburse the cost of energy efficient home equipment that would have actually lowered Americans' energy costs.

House Republicans are lowering energy costs for polluters all right and lowering all of our life expectancy right along with it.

Madam Chair, H.R. 1 puts politics over people and puts polluters over people.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Chair, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES), who has offered so much positive input on the Lower Energy Costs Act. He is the author of the BUILDER Act and added so many other great provisions to this bill.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Madam Chair, I can make posters, too. I think I got the right backdrop there. Let's talk a little bit about credibility. Let's talk a little bit about the challenges that this country is experiencing, like the little girl on the playground and what our families across America are experiencing right now. Let's talk about why.

This body is about credibility. It is about your word. Let's talk a little bit about why America is experiencing the challenges that they are. We are seeing higher electricity prices that are making American families unable to be able to afford medicine and groceries, refuel their car, or pay electricity bills. Why is that happening?

It is happening because my friends across the aisle have refused to produce American energy. It is a supply and demand issue. This happened when they gained power. The day the President of the United States was inaugurated, Madam Chair, gasoline prices in my home State were as low as a \$1.74 a gal-

lon. Let me ask you, where in the world are you going to find that today?

You have cut off production of oil and gas. Don't take my word for it. You know, one term I have never heard anybody say is bring back that Jimmy Carter energy policy. Yet, when Jimmy Carter was President, he leased 100 times more acres of the lands and waters for energy production. Why do we have a crisis in energy right now?

It was self-inflicted. Why has this administration and these Democrats sold off hundreds of millions of barrels of oil from our Strategic Petroleum Reserve, the emergency reserve that was designed for crises, not awful policy?

It is because they refused to produce energy. You have created a supply problem, and you are using our emergency reserves to address it.

You sit here and also raise royalty rates. You proposed increased pipeline fees. You proposed taxes or enacted taxes on American energy, all driving up the costs, then you sit here and wonder why we have high prices? These were all self-inflicted wounds. You did this to America—your policies.

Madam Chair, it is remarkable seeing what is going on right now, listening to my friends across the aisle talking about the environment. Yet, their own legislation requires the use of critical minerals that they at the same time have banned or prevented from being mined or processed or refined in the United States.

In some cases, China has 80 percent of these critical minerals locked up. If you force markets in the direction and if you force the use of those strategic materials, and the only place that has it is China, who are you benefiting?

China loves their energy policies. They benefit from it. All roads lead to China. Over 80 percent of the solar panels are made in China. Whenever this administration found that China was illegally subsidizing and illegally dumping solar panels in the United States, they banned them and put tariffs on them.

China then starts sending them through other countries. And you know what this administration does? They say: Yeah, that is fine. They acknowledge that there were Chinese solar panels being sent through other countries, and they allowed it. The Biden administration allowed it, and my friends across the aisle have done nothing to stop it.

The truth is, is that emissions have gone up under their policies, not down. Madam Chair, let me say that again. Under the previous administration, emissions went down. Greenhouse gas emissions went down an average of 2½ percent a year.

In the first year of the Biden administration, my friends across the aisle working with them closely, emissions went up 6 percent last year and went up another 1.3 or 1.4 percent. I am going to say it again. My friends across the aisle and their policies have resulted in higher greenhouse gas emis-

sions. They have increased our dependence upon foreign energy sources.

We had the Secretary of the Interior standing right in our committee, and he wasn't even aware that we had become increasingly dependent upon Russian energy.

They talk about corporate welfare. I agree, which is why the over \$600 billion that my friends across the aisle have put toward effectively bribing companies into investing in renewable energy sources that in many cases are not economic, simply doesn't make sense.

This bill follows logic. It follows good policy. It ensures that we are getting energy resources from the United States. It ensures the affordability by bringing American energy online. It results in lower global emissions.

Madam Chair, I urge support of this legislation.

Ms. STANSBURY. Madam Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI).

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Chair, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 1, which should be called the polluters over people act. This is a critical moment. Just last week, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released its sixth and final assessment, which presents our most comprehensive understanding of climate science to date. It is not, as my colleague suggested, that you can go outside and breathe fresh air and decide that there is no climate change.

Scientists have made it abundantly clear, there are two options: significantly cut emissions now or face catastrophic challenges ahead.

Future generations will look back and scrutinize the decisions we make as leaders. Did we have the political courage to take action or did we ignore science, stifle the most vulnerable voices in our community, and leave a climate catastrophe for our children and grandchildren?

In northwest Oregon, my home, smoke from raging wildfires made the air unhealthy to breathe, and in the summer of 2021 hundreds of people in the Pacific Northwest died from a 1 in 10,000 year heat dome event where temperatures reached 118 degrees.

Acidic oceans are harming our fishing industries. That is from carbon pollution. Droughts and extreme weather patterns jeopardize the livelihoods of our farmers. Warmer temperatures in the Columbia River are further endangering salmon that are so vital to the region and indigenous peoples.

H.R. 1 is a dangerous move in the wrong direction under the guise of promoting lower energy costs. It would do no such thing, and the American people will not be fooled. Instead, this bill is a package of anti-climate and anti-public lands policy that would undermine recent environmental protections, destroy the National Environmental Policy Act, and take a significant step back in the fight against climate change.

The bill will also raise, not lower, costs for working families by repealing tax cuts the Democrats passed last year for home efficiency upgrades. It even repeals the methane emissions reduction program.

While Americans faced higher gas prices, make no mistake, the top five big oil companies made record profits—more than \$196 billion last year—that is more than the economic output of most countries.

These companies abuse billions of dollars in taxpayer-funded subsidies, stockpiled thousands of unused leases on millions of acres of public lands and engage in price gouging at the pump.

This bill? It advances policies that allow Big Oil to increase their profits, even more at the expense of our constituents. The bill would expedite dirty mining operations, exempt oil, gas, and drilling industries from adhering to important environmental regulations, shorten public review timelines, and limit public engagement.

We must protect our bedrock environmental laws that safeguard communities and allow the public to have a say in local projects. We must continue the implementation of the Inflation Reduction Act, which finally, after so many years, will make significant investments we need to save our planet.

Addressing the climate crisis cannot be delayed. We must defeat this bill and turn our attention to investments that create jobs.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Ms. STANSBURY. Madam Chair, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentlewoman from Oregon.

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Chair, we must defeat this bill and turn our attention to investments that create jobs, cut costs for working families, and grow our clean energy economy for the sake of our planet, our vulnerable communities, and for future generations to come.

□ 1615

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Chair, I checked. We are in the 118th Congress, even though our colleagues keep putting signs up to describe their so-called Inflation Reduction Act, the polluters over people act.

We also know they call this the climate bill. Even President Biden, in his State of the Union Address, talked about the \$370 billion investment in climate in the Inflation Reduction Act. We know that giveaway is not \$370 billion but now is being projected to be \$1.2 trillion in outlays—again, increasing inflation, not reducing inflation.

Madam Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. TIFFANY), who is the chairman of the Federal Lands Subcommittee of the Natural Resources Committee.

Mr. TIFFANY. Madam Chair, on January 20, 2021, President Biden declared war on American energy when he shut down the Keystone XL pipeline. Today, we begin the process to lower energy

costs. This is the first stroke of what I hope are many bills to come forward to get energy costs under control for the American people.

Let's go back over the past couple of years of this Congress and what President Biden did. They passed things like the so-called Inflation Reduction Act. They passed a bill called the infrastructure bill.

What were those bills really and some of the others from the last Congress?

They were the Green New Deal. You, the American public, know now what the Green New Deal will do to you.

Let's talk about my district a little bit. Propane, which is a primary heating source for many of us in northern Wisconsin, we paid 80 cents a gallon in the summer of 2020 to fill our tanks. We paid \$2 a gallon—2½ times as much—to heat our homes just a couple of years after the previous administration had left office.

Think about the Ford Motor Company, an iconic company here in America. They lost \$2 billion on the electric vehicle segment of their business. I can tell you that contractors, loggers, and farmers are not going to drive a Ford Lightning in northern Wisconsin when it is 25 degrees below zero because it does not work.

I think about Vilas County, where they were going to apply to repair a road under the infrastructure bill. It would have cost \$1.5 million using Federal money. I talked to a local contractor. Without the Federal permitting requirements, they could build it for half of that, \$750,000.

One of the key provisions of this is the reform of NEPA. It does not change environmental standards. It just makes it easier to get projects done. It is time to reduce that red tape here in America on the American people and on American job creators.

Madam Chair, what is this all about at the end of the day? This is about whether you choose America or you choose Communist China.

Is this going to be a 21st century of the American people just like the 20th century was? It was one of the greatest centuries the people of this world had ever seen, when a country that was founded on liberty, freedom, and opportunity was ascendant, and we stood astride the world.

Are we going to do that in the 21st century? Bills like this are how we are going to make the 21st century an American century rather than a Communist Chinese century.

Let's lower energy costs and ensure job security, economic security, and national security for the American people.

The Acting CHAIR. Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair and not to a perceived viewing audience.

Ms. STANSBURY. Madam Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BEYER).

Mr. BEYER. Madam Chair, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 1. It is a very

shortsighted, anti-science, anti-environment, and anti-family bill.

Last week, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released its synthesis report and reminded us how urgent it is that we transition to a zero-carbon economy now. We need new clean energy, and we need it fast.

There is an opportunity for Congress to engage on permitting and transmission so new energy projects, especially clean energy projects, can get up and running as soon as possible. However, instead of a meaningful conversation, H.R. 1 is a sad regurgitation of the majority's bill from the 115th Congress with attacks on the Inflation Reduction Act.

Transmission conversations are completely absent, yet we know that investment in transmission is key to our energy future.

This bill will repeal important programs to help Americans make their homes energy efficient. These popular programs are already in motion to help families lower energy costs, and this bill will take them away.

H.R. 1 reduces the fees and royalties for oil and gas development, padding the pockets of oil and gas at a time when their record profits are at an all-time high.

This is not about energy prices for American families but profits for fossil fuel companies at exactly the time when the whole world knows we need to move away from them as quickly as possible.

On the one hand, my Republican friends are so concerned with the deficit that they are holding the economy hostage over their brinkmanship on the debt limit. Then, on the other hand, they bring a partisan bill to the floor that the Congressional Budget Office said will increase that deficit by \$2½ billion.

I implore my Republican colleagues to take the deficit seriously and pass a clean debt limit. Please take our energy needs seriously and our climate seriously and work with us on our transmission needs.

We are interested in the discussions. Our door is open when you want to work with us to get things done and move past partisan messaging bills that will be dead on arrival in the 60-vote Senate.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. VALADAO), who understands what bad energy policy does to rural America.

Mr. VALADAO. Madam Chair, I thank the chairman for yielding me time.

Madam Chair, this administration's regulatory assault on American energy production has been devastating for my constituents in the Central Valley. Every week, I hear from my neighbors, friends, and constituents about the skyrocketing price of monthly energy bills.

Over the summer, people in California were paying over \$6 per gallon

for gas. It is unacceptable that even though America has some of the greatest energy resources of any nation in the world, my constituents are having trouble putting gas in their tanks and food on their tables.

That is why I am proud to support the Lower Energy Costs Act, and I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to do the same. This bill will cut red tape and allow us to increase our supply of safe, clean, and affordable energy.

I am proud that language from my bill, the NEPA Adequacy Streamlining Act, is included in this bill. This makes the approval of new energy projects easier by allowing the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture to use previously conducted environmental assessments for similar projects. This is a commonsense reform that removes one of the many layers of bureaucratic red tape in our permitting process.

This bill is full of the same types of policies that streamline our energy production to increase our supply of clean, affordable energy.

I want to respond to some of the opponents of this bill. My Democratic colleagues claim that this legislation is harmful to our environment. This is just not true. America has some of the strictest environmental standards of any nation in the world. When we produce energy here, we do it cleaner and safer than countries we would be importing it from.

Something important to remember is that decreasing domestic production does not reduce the demand for energy. Reducing our ability to produce oil and gas in the U.S. just increases our reliance on foreign countries for these imports. That means instead of using clean energy we produce here and creating good-paying American jobs in the process, we are reliant on imports from countries like Russia and Venezuela that are not held to the same environmental standards we have here in the U.S.

If your argument is that you want to reduce emissions, then increasing U.S. energy production is how you do it.

Despite wishes from the President and the far left, we cannot abandon traditional energy sources like oil and gas. While we as a country should continue to develop and pursue other energy sources, we will still need oil and gas for a long time. Why not produce it here in the U.S.?

I support an all-of-the-above approach to energy production and use, but that does not mean immediately transitioning to 100 percent renewable fuels. Until alternative energy sources are more reliable, we will continue to need transitional fuels.

If my Democratic colleagues cared about the environment as much as they say they do, then supporting the increased production of clean and reliable American-made energy should be a no-brainer.

Passing the Lower Energy Costs Act is a critical step to lowering prices,

creating good-paying jobs, and strengthening our national security.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote in support of this bill.

Ms. STANSBURY. Madam Chair, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FROST).

Mr. FROST. Madam Chair, I rise today in strong opposition to H.R. 1, the pollution over people act.

This is a bill filled with dangerous, unpopular, and unnecessary policy that will worsen our climate crisis—our existential climate crisis.

I am part of a generation who has grown up with the very real fear that, in our lifetimes, we will all experience an unlivable planet, that we will lack breathable air and drinkable water, that our houses will be destroyed again and again in natural disasters, that we will develop asthma and struggle to breathe, and that we will have a shortage of food.

Sitting here, I have heard a lot from my colleagues repeating that we need to lower energy costs. My question is: Where are the actions on ensuring that price gouging isn't happening at the pump?

This is exactly why energy costs are higher at the pump. I agree, but what about the real costs, the cost of life? What we know is that the cost of not doing anything is far greater than the cost of taking action right now.

You might not be the ones paying for it, but future generations will be, and I think a body like ours should be thinking about the future and the present.

Many people around the globe are already experiencing these threats. Among them are farmers, farmworkers, coastal communities, and community members who cannot afford air-conditioning costs.

I would like to believe that, out of compassion for my generation and our vulnerable communities, Republican Members of this body would come to the table and act in a bipartisan way to protect us from this fate.

It is possible to create a green transition so we can preserve jobs and the planet and create a whole new economy, a green economy, with good-paying union jobs for all of our people. We can invest in clean energy and train those working in the oil and gas industries so they can have new, good-paying jobs in fulfilling careers.

We can do these things, but right now, my Republican colleagues aren't. H.R. 1 is not about what is right for their constituents, working people, or what is right for the Earth. It is about what is right for oil and gas executives getting rich off polluting our planet.

This bill would bring back the defunct Keystone XL pipeline, reversing President Biden's wise executive action that ended it. It rubberstamps new construction of new pipelines.

Not only is this bill not informed about what is best for the future, but it looks like they haven't learned from what has happened in the past. This bill requires two new Gulf of Mexico oil

lease sites. This is very damaging to my home State of Florida.

It has been a tradition for both Democrats and Republicans from Florida to support no offshore drilling in the State of Florida. I am looking forward to seeing all of my Republican colleagues who are part of the Florida delegation voting "no" on this bill to keep intact their word. I know one of my colleagues said that this body is about integrity and keeping our word. I look forward to seeing those "no" votes.

In 2010, the Deepwater Horizon explosion pumped 210 million gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico, polluting more than 1,000 miles of Florida beaches with toxic oil. These literal waves of pollution closed beaches and deprived Floridians and visitors of 10 million beach days on our world-class beaches. The economic impact on our tourist industry was profound. The impact on our seafood industry was catastrophic. No one wanted a meal coming from a poisonous sea.

In this bill, Republicans are burying their heads in the oil-covered sand and requiring more oil lease sales in the area. I fear for the health of my community.

Florida is in the middle of a climate change crossfire. We have rising seas that are creating higher and more destructive storms. We just had Hurricane Ian last year, the deadliest hurricane in 100 years. Entire communities were completely decimated and wiped out. In Orlando, it caused flooding like we have never seen before, leaving constituents homeless.

H.R. 1 comes weeks after the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report. This report makes it clear: Continued greenhouse gas emissions will lead to destabilizing global warming, and our own only hope is rapid and sustained reductions in greenhouse gasses.

I heard a colleague blame Democrats for emissions. That is also not true, but I am glad to hear he was impassioned about blaming Democrats for increased emissions, which would lead me to believe that he agrees that we have to bring down emissions, which the report also said we have to do in a very quick way so we can have a livable planet.

Madam Chair, I will vote "no" on H.R. 1, and I urge my colleagues to do the same. We can and we must do better than this, not just for us but for future generations.

I invite my Republican colleagues to abandon this harmful bill and come to the table to work in a bipartisan way on smart energy policy because the decisions you make today will impact future generations and condemn my entire generation to a lifetime of suffering and put us on a path toward an unlivable future. I hope we will make the right decision.

□ 1630

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. CISCOMANI). Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. JAMES).

Mr. JAMES. Mr. Chair, I would like to start off by applauding my colleagues for including language in H.R. 1 that reaffirms our Nation's commitment to protecting freshwater resources, especially the Great Lakes.

This bill upholds our commitment to protecting our natural resources in Michigan and upholding the ban on oil and gas development in our Great Lakes. We are blessed with rich waterways and have an obligation to protect them.

We talk a lot about becoming energy independent, but what does this mean for our country and the American people?

It starts with access to essential resources without relying on the goodwill of foreign nations, especially our adversaries.

Mining is essential to our energy strategy and manufacturing independence. Without independent, secure, and safe minerals, there is no manufacturing independence. Worse, there is no national security.

I put forward the national strategy to reshore mineral supply chains amendment because I believe it is one of those commonsense issues that both sides can agree on.

Democrats have advocated for an electric future. That hinges on sustainably sourced mining.

Republicans have made it clear that establishing energy and manufacturing independence to grow our economy and lower prices is a top priority.

I have actually found a bipartisan partner in the White House. Last week, I asked Secretary Blinken whether he would be open to participating with me on legislation to create a 21st century national strategy to strengthen the American industrial base to reshore our critical minerals and end slavery in our supply chains.

His answer? We welcome working with you on that.

This amendment is a practical step toward that goal.

To the Chinese Communist Party, my amendment signals that America is done being taken advantage of. To the rest of the world, it shows that America stands strong and strategically. To hardworking Americans, it means lower costs and more money in their pockets.

I represent the number one manufacturing district in the country, but our Great Lakes are table stakes for anyone who seeks to represent them. We must have balance in how we approach this, and I believe H.R. 1 strikes that balance.

America has leaned on the 10th Congressional District in a world war and a global pandemic, and we expect to be called upon again. We will stand ready to help, but we must be prepared. That starts with a national strategy to reshore mineral supply chains. It is critically important.

Ms. STANSBURY. Mr. Chair, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE).

Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE. Mr. Chair, I rise today in strong opposition to H.R. 1, House Republicans' polluters over people act.

When the House Democratic majority passed the landmark Inflation Reduction Act, they delivered key environmental safeguards to bolster our clean energy economy and lower costs.

The legislation that Republicans are bringing to the floor attempts to undermine those promising provisions because of political animus. Instead of trying to meet the needs of the American taxpayer, they are working to line the pockets of fossil fuel tycoons and exacerbate toxic mining projects that directly harm communities like mine.

H.R. 1 is not about the people, it is about a political win, and it is hokey. This legislation would undo significant environmental regulations central to our public health and environmental protections at a time when people are facing an alarming pattern of severe weather, lack of access to clean water and air, and blatant pollution across the country.

Pollution kills people. I can tell you that no one here is breathing dirty air. No one here is drinking dirty water. No one here is growing anything in dirty soil. If we are not, that means that no one else should be forced to do so.

It would roll back the environmental review processes under NEPA, putting community health and safety at risk while worsening pollution and the health risks associated with toxic chemicals such as PFAS, the same forever chemicals that are killing our firefighters.

I urge you to listen to the committee hearings where you will hear them say there is no need for community engagement, polluters can self-monitor.

That is why I was so disappointed but, oh, not surprised when Republicans voted down my amendment to include an environmental analysis and review of how oil and gas development will impact community health and safety because it will.

Instead, Republicans are so eager to rush into free-for-all oil and gas development that they are unable to reckon with the serious health consequences they are pawning off onto our constituents. You would have more respect for a bill if they cared enough about the health and safety of your community, if they wanted to protect your child or your grandmother's health.

Unfortunately, we know that the Black community is disproportionately impacted by environmental pollution. I have talked about what is going on in my district every single week. Black Americans are three times more likely to die of asthma after continued exposure to polluted air, a result of historic, systemic racism.

This legislation makes it virtually impossible for impacted communities to file lawsuits against corporate pol-

luters for environmental and public health damages, so it is killing your lungs and silencing your voice.

It continues to put mining rights ahead of the interests of the community, especially in indigenous communities where mining was used to settle the West. This bill declares that indigenous communities shouldn't even be consulted about what is going on on their lands, to rip away lands from indigenous communities in favor of our own traditional, patriarchal, American individualistic interests.

Even more than that, we have seen ties between environmental racism and increased rates of gender violence at these mining sites where indigenous women and girls are attacked by employees at the man camps. Now they don't even care about the safety of women and girls.

Polling shows that two-thirds of Americans want legislation that addresses the climate crisis, proving once again that Republicans answer to special interests and not the will of the people. This is all about dirty money, profits over people, and it is disgraceful.

Shame on them, Mr. Chair, for deliberately ignoring the health of our people and the environment. I oppose this bill and any other fossil fuel cash grabs the Republicans send our way.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, when I see the sign about selling out clean air, I think about the coal-powered plant per week that is being built in China so they can manufacture the minerals that we need here in America.

I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS), the chairman of the Small Business Committee.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of this energy package. I repeat, in support of this package. This crucial piece of legislation would increase domestic energy production, reform the permitting process, and reverse the Biden administration's anti-energy policies that are crushing our Nation's small oil and gas producers.

As the chairman of the Committee on Small Business, I hear from our small producers about the damage that has been done to their industry over the last few years. The Biden administration's hostile approach toward this entire industry is harming small businesses. They are simultaneously trying to deal with high inflation created by the Biden administration, supply chain issues created by the Biden administration, and an inability to access capital.

Tomorrow, my committee will examine the critical role small business plays in domestic energy production and highlight how this legislation is a step in the right direction. We should be the supplier of, not the buyer of. Let the people decide.

I applaud the Speaker and the chairman and all of my Republican colleagues that put together H.R. 1 to deliver reliable and affordable energy for the American people.

I have something to say to my friends on the other side. Profits—I repeat, profits—are good. In God we trust.

Ms. STANSBURY. Mr. Chair, I yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN).

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to House Republicans' polluters over people act, H.R. 1.

This dangerous bill appears to be doubling down on dirty fossil fuels to pad the profits of polluters and Big Oil. Our Republican friends seem to be oblivious to the fact that, as we speak, there are communities in this country devastated by extreme weather events, from deadly tornadoes to life-threatening atmospheric rivers to unprecedented snowfall. Instead of legislating with an eye toward the future, our colleagues across the aisle are bringing up a bill that pretends there is no climate crisis.

Scientists agree that action on climate is literally life or death. The recent IPCC report that just came out reminds us that we are out of time. It is now or never if we want to spare our kids from a future that includes more frequent and even worse extreme weather events and more climate-driven food insecurity.

The world's best climate scientists call this a climate time bomb. Our Republican colleagues call it a hoax, and they produce bills like this.

My colleagues seem to want to talk about speeding up permitting. Great, let's talk about permitting.

Democrats just secured \$1 billion for permitting streamlining in the Inflation Reduction Act for that very purpose. Let me remind you, not a single Republican voted for that bill, which was actually a solution to accelerating clean energy.

What are they trying to do instead?

They are trying to claw back the funding that we approved. They are trying to slow down permitting and do the exact opposite of what they claim that they want to see with their so-called permitting reform package.

If they want to protect this planet for future generations, then anyone who cares about that really needs to read the fine print of this bill because it would force agencies to hold oil and gas lease sales on public lands even if they are not needed. If these sales don't get enough bids, they are replaced with more sales, at lower prices. So we are not just giving away our public lands, we are doing it at laughably low prices, locking in these lands for oil and gas development for decades to come. This is not just extreme. It is obscene.

The Inflation Reduction Act included multiple oil and gas leasing reforms, modest reforms, to ensure that the public finally gets a fair share for on-shore and offshore fossil fuel development. If we are going to begin to address the impacts of the climate crisis, then ending massive fossil fuel sub-

sidies is a pretty good place to start. Under this legislation, not only are we going in the opposite direction, we are removing even these modest provisions to allow taxpayers to finally get their fair share from the incredible profits that these polluting industries would receive.

This legislation lowers royalty rates, repeals interest fees, reinstates non-competitive leasing, and it does all of this while fossil fuel companies are rolling in record profits of \$451 billion for the oil and gas industry last year.

H.R. 1 is the biggest rollback of the Clean Water Act that we have seen in 50 years. It will remove important clean water protections for States and Tribal Governments specifically. Under current law, section 401 of the Clean Water Act gives States and Tribes authority to review water quality as well as requirements of State law on any project or activity that requires a Clean Water Act permit. This bill would slash that authority and shorten the time frame for which they can review such projects.

Make no mistake, this will make it harder to protect the waterways and the communities that depend on clean water in this country. Whether you are in East Palestine or Philadelphia or anywhere else in this country, we should know better than to take something as critical as clean water for granted.

I had an amendment that would retain these section 401 protections for Tribal Governments. This was a simple test because often some of my Republican colleagues say that they believe in Tribal sovereignty and they want to empower Tribal voices. So we came up with an amendment to let them do that, to just at least take away this terrible provision when it came to Tribal Governments. They declined to move that amendment forward. It was blocked.

Why do our Republican colleagues want to block Tribal voices?

One of the last details that we should note, if you listen to the debt ceiling debate, this cyclical, situational concern for fiscal conservatism which is coming around again, my colleagues on the other side shout from the rooftops now about the deficit.

Well, guess what? This legislation is not just bad for people, not just bad for the planet, it is fiscally irresponsible. The CBO projects that it will add to the deficit.

Just a reminder, the Inflation Reduction Act, which all of my friends voted against, paid for itself and reduced the deficit.

Look, we do need to be talking about permit streamlining for clean energy infrastructure. This is very important. We need more efficient procedures to bring more renewable energy online, to modernize and upgrade electricity transmission facilities, but this bill doesn't even begin to touch any of that. That is our greatest need, and it is nowhere in this bill.

If my Republican friends want to be taken seriously regarding permitting reform and not just giveaways to polluters, they need to offer real solutions. This package is not it.

For the sake of the planet and future generations, I urge my colleagues to vote against this bill. There are real, workable solutions to addressing our energy needs, extreme weather, food insecurity, and all of the downstream consequences of climate change, but this bill doesn't do it.

□ 1645

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Guam (Mr. MOYLAN).

Mr. MOYLAN. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 1, the Lower Energy Costs Act, a historic and consequential piece of legislation to bring down our skyrocketing energy costs and secure America's energy independence.

On my home island of Guam, energy costs have reached historical highs. Less than a year ago, gas prices reached an all-time high of \$6.49 a gallon. On average, gas prices are still 40 percent higher than they were before Biden took office.

The people of Guam can't continue to face these inflated costs. We must deliver solutions here in Washington to help ease their pain.

This administration's misguided energy policies have shackled our economy and penalized hardworking Americans. There is a misguided war on American energy, and that war needs to end now.

Let's set the record straight. Critics on the bill claim it is simply a handout to oil and gas companies. This couldn't be further from the truth.

The Lower Energy Costs Act is an all-of-the-above energy solution. This legislation streamlines regulatory burdens holding back our infrastructure projects, whether it is a natural gas pipeline or transmission lines from a solar facility—both are held back by the same.

It also contains important reforms for not only traditional types of energy but also the energy of tomorrow.

With the Lower Energy Costs Act, Republicans are delivering on one of our fundamental campaign promises—to bring gas prices down and to ease the burden on hardworking Americans. We are quite literally keeping the lights on.

Many Guam residents constantly live under the growing threat of China and North Korea. We are some, if not the only, Americans who receive warnings during Korean missile tests and whose waters are routinely invaded by Chinese vessels.

Standing up to our adversaries is what keeps America strong. Energy security is national security.

For too long, we have allowed countries like China and Russia to control energy production and dominate the critical mineral supply chain.



Securing our energy independence and critical mineral supply chain ensures that foreign adversaries can't use these resources to threaten or pressure us in the future.

This legislation will make sure that the minerals we need for the technologies of tomorrow are sourced clearly, safely, and responsibly right here at home.

America has the highest standards for workplace safety and environmental concerns, and we know the conditions in Chinese-operated mines in countries like the Congo are truly horrific.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chairman, I yield an additional 20 seconds to the gentleman from Guam.

Mr. MOYLAN. Mr. Chairman, do you want to know the best way to lower global greenhouse gases?

Produce the energy right here in America.

Do you want to know the best way to secure critical minerals while ensuring minimal impact on the environment? Mine right here in America.

Do you want to improve our national security while also giving the economy a boost? Pass the Lower Energy Costs Act today.

Ms. STANSBURY. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to ensure that the American people and every single New Mexican back home in my home State knows exactly what this bill is all about.

H.R. 1 is not a bill to cut costs and unlock American energy. H.R. 1 is a blatant giveaway of public lands, public waters, and public minerals to the highest bidder.

It guts environmental laws, it opens oil and gas leasing to mining and multinational companies, and it will send our communities and our laws back to the 19th century—the 19th century—to 1847 specifically, when we opened the West through the hardrock mining law to minerals claims and multinational corporations, who took advantage of our communities, who dumped tailings piles into our rivers and our streams, and who strip-mined sacred and ancestral lands of our indigenous communities.

That is right. This bill would take us back before the automobile was invented, before we had electricity, before women had the right to vote in this country, and before New Mexico even became a territory of the United States when our communities, lands, and waters were stripped away from them and given to the highest bidder.

So let me be clear: This legislation is not about lowering costs. It is not about lessening the burden at the pump. It is not about lowering costs for our families.

These are just talking points that have been provided by fossil fuel and mining companies and by their allies across the aisle who see the opportunity to strip away environmental regulations and vast amounts of public

resources, lands, and waters for private profit.

In fact, this bill will increase the deficit, robbing our communities of more than a century of hard-fought environmental wins to protect our lands and waters.

That is why House Democrats have a clear message today: Not on our watch.

Let's be clear and talk exactly about what this bill is and does. My friends, Mr. Chairman, on the other side of the aisle want to claim that this bill will create jobs, that more drilling and mining will lower costs, and that it is going to somehow magically solve our global critical mineral shortage.

Let me be clear, as somebody whose parents worked in the energy industry. My father was a welder in the oil and gas fields; my mother, a crane mechanic at a coal-fired power plant.

As somebody who spent over two decades of my career working on natural resources issues, let me say it loud and clear: We cannot mine and drill our way to solve these problems.

In fact, this bill not only does not help our communities but puts our Nation and our planet at risk. Scientists from across the world released a report just last week that made clear that if we do not take significant action right now to curb global emissions, we will cross a global tipping point and catastrophic global climate change.

This bill would threaten our global planetary health. In fact, this legislation, which the President has already said he would veto, would open vast swaths of our land and our water to oil and gas drilling, to mining, not to lower costs, but to line the pockets of wealthy oil companies.

In the name of streamlining, it would gut environmental laws like the National Environmental Policy Act, a piece of bipartisan legislation that Richard Nixon signed; the Clean Water Act; the Clean Air Act.

It would gut protections for our communities to be able to actually have a say in what happens in their own lands and waters. It would make it easier for large corporations to pollute and dump toxins without consequence.

Finally, this legislation not only does not lower costs but raises the deficit by billions of dollars.

So I ask the American people and I ask New Mexicans: Is this what you want Congress working on, a 175-page bill filled with thinly veiled corporate giveaways that gut our environmental laws, that cut our communities out, and that would line the pockets of private corporations?

No. The American people want clean air. They want clean water. They want climate action. They want a planet that they can leave to their children.

That is why Democrats and the President fought to pass the Inflation Reduction Act just a few months ago in this Chamber.

That bill makes the largest investment in climate action ever in the history of this country and ever in the history of this planet.

Our bill, the bill we passed to address the global climate crisis, will create millions of jobs. It will rebuild our infrastructure and our local economies.

It will invest in our communities and the resilience of our ecosystems. It will reduce household costs like our friends across the aisle are trying to claim with this giveaway bill.

Guess what? It reduces the deficit, all while putting us on a path to cutting carbon emissions in this country by 40 percent by 2030.

Guess what else happened? Not a single Republican in this Chamber voted for that bill. Not one. Not one Member on the other side of the aisle voted to lower costs, voted for a clean energy future, voted to protect the environment, voted to protect our communities.

We cannot drill and mine our way to a clean energy and climate secure future.

Mr. Chairman, we cannot afford to pass H.R. 1.

We cannot afford to send our communities back to the 19th century. We cannot afford to let private companies deforest and strip-mine our lands.

We cannot afford to go back to a time when rivers were on fire, and companies dumped toxins into our groundwater with impunity.

That is why I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this legislation because the path is clear. We must take climate action now and build a clean energy economy and leave a livable planet for our communities, for the future, and for our Nation.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chairman, thanks to Democrat energy policies, Putin, Xi Jinping, and the crown prince of Saudi are the ones that are drilling and mining their way to prosperity at the expense of the American public.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 1, Lower Energy Costs Act, an actual solution to the problems we are facing.

We have seen what happens abroad when Nations are at the mercy of energy imports from nefarious actors. We have seen what happens at home when energy prices skyrocket and families struggle to pay for gas and groceries.

That is why I am a staunch supporter of this bill and the mission behind it. H.R. 1 is an important step toward unleashing American energy, lowering prices, and strengthening our energy supply chains.

The American government should not be in the business of picking winners and losers. We need an all-of-the-above energy approach.

Increasing production and untangling energy from overly burdensome red tape is key toward providing certainty and stability to American businesses, consumers, and families. That is why I support this bill, and I urge a "yes" vote.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. MULLIN).

Mr. MULLIN. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 1, the polluters over people act. The truth is simple. We have no time to waste in the fight against climate change.

This Republican bill would reverse years of progress, emboldening polluters and repealing critical environmental regulations, all while increasing the Federal deficit.

As a father of two young boys, I know this is not the future we want to leave for our children.

□ 1700

Instead of rewarding fossil industries with more record-shattering profits, we need to transition to a clean energy economy by expanding on Democratic wins like the Inflation Reduction Act.

In my home State of California, we have seen the dangers that a warming planet poses to our livelihoods and environment. Wildfires, sea level rise, flooding, and extreme weather patterns can be fatal to our communities.

My bayfront district is surrounded by water. Our communities are threatened by sea level rise on both sides of our peninsula. H.R. 1 would only raise this threat.

H.R. 1 would prioritize the interests of Big Oil and protect profiteers at the expense of our most vulnerable communities and ecosystems.

Critical habitats like the San Francisco Bay would suffer. I recently supported over \$75 million in bay restoration funding—natural solutions to sea level rise.

H.R. 1 would significantly harm those efforts.

The American people asked for lower costs, more jobs, and a livable future, not shameless giveaways to Big Oil, not for the polluters over people act.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Colorado (Mrs. BOEBERT), another member of the House Natural Resources Committee

Mrs. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, I remind my colleagues, last night while they charged their phones, this morning when they brewed their cup of coffee, or even considered maybe putting on a mask for the third year in a row, and even this very moment as we stand in this Chamber with the lights on, the mics working, the AC turned down very, very low, for every one of these actions, they have an American energy worker to thank for it.

Instead of being grateful, Joe Biden and D.C. Democrats have waged a war on the American energy production, and the consequences have been devastating for the American people. Gas prices are up 44 percent, and instead of trying to enable moms and dads to get to and from work without breaking the bank, my Democratic colleagues are still suffering from Trump derangement syndrome. I don't know, maybe Pfizer has a vaccine for that one.

You know, in my district, we have been regulated into poverty because of Democrat policies pushing oil and gas

out of our communities. Now, moms who could have stayed home are forced to get a job to supplement the income that is lost from the good-paying job that dad no longer has. Then there are the childcare struggles that they are facing and the inflation struggles that they are facing that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, Mr. Chairman, have created.

Mr. Chairman, instead of screaming: "Orange man bad" on TikTok, maybe they should come up with some real solutions because that isn't going to solve the problems that America is facing.

American Republicans are focused on delivering policy solutions to address those problems. H.R. 1 includes my bill, the American Energy Act, which will reduce gas prices by providing certainty for responsible energy production and preventing baseless litigation. After all, no one produces better, safer, cleaner energy than us right here in the United States of America.

Mr. Chairman, it is past time House Democrats start to have a little empathy and dismount their moral high horse of climate change. There are thousands of children currently today slaving away in the Congo at Chinese-owned mines. They have to dig for cobalt with their bare hands. Instead of freeing these slaves and even ourselves from the need of this resource, they want to buy more Chinese-made products. It is clear they have a climate religion. They worship the Earth while I worship the creator, not the creation.

We are here to be good stewards of our land, so stop sacrificing the American families at your altar of climate change. The choice here is simple. America can continue to rely on foreign energy produced by nations that hate us—

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. MIKE GARCIA of California). The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chairman, I yield the gentlewoman an 30 additional seconds.

Mrs. BOEBERT. Mr. Chairman, the choice is simple. America can continue to rely on foreign energy produced by nations that hate us and hate our values, or we can become energy independent once again.

Pursue energy dominance and put the American roughneck before OPEC, and maybe, just maybe, we put the American people before the Green New Deal lobbyists.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly support the passage of H.R. 1.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. LIEU).

Mr. LIEU. Mr. Chairman, let me first commend Ranking Member Raul Grijalva for fighting the good fight every day.

I rise today to oppose the polluters over people act. It is an extreme MAGA Republican bill that will increase pollution by lowering environmental standards. It will increase climate

change by removing a lot of provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act designed to combat climate change. It also increases the deficit.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, it will increase the deficit by over \$2.4 billion just on one bill alone. It is like a triple threat of badness. It increases pollution, it increases global warming, and it increases the deficit.

Now, let's just take a review of what we have done up to now. Last term when Democrats were in control, we passed laws that moved the American family forward.

We passed the American Rescue Plan that got our economy back on track as we were coming out of a pandemic.

We then followed that up with the infrastructure law to rebuild roads, bridges, and highways; to take lead out of water pipes; and to put broadband everywhere from rural areas to inner cities and everywhere in between.

We then followed that up with the CHIPS and Science Act. That is going to bring manufacturing back to the United States.

Then we followed that up with the Inflation Reduction Act, which not only helped reduce the deficit—Democrats reduced the deficit by over \$1.7 trillion last year—but that Inflation Reduction Act also had the highest number of climate change projects and the highest amount of climate change funding in world history.

This term when Republicans took control, what did you all do? Well, let me tell you. You read the Constitution on the House floor. You took turns doing that. You also held not one, but two congressional hearings complaining about Twitter.

It is more than just stupid stuff. Extreme MAGA Republicans are trying to pass extreme MAGA Republican bills like H.R. 1 that is going to, again, increase climate change, increase pollution, and increase the deficit. It is also a monumental waste of time, because guess what? This bill ain't going anywhere.

It is not going to pass the Senate, because you need to override a filibuster. That ain't gonna happen.

Even if it miraculously does pass the Senate, the administration has already signaled they are going to veto it. We are just wasting time here when we should be focused on more relevant issues like how do we prevent gun violence at schools.

My heart goes out to the victims of the tragic mass shooting yesterday in Nashville. Three of the victims were 9-year-old children. Recently, a member of the Republican Caucus from Tennessee was asked what we are going to do to fix school violence.

His answer was: We are not going to fix it.

Well, Democrats have a different view. Instead of wasting time on political stunts like H.R. 1, let's pass universal background checks into law.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, may I inquire as to the time remaining.



The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Arkansas has 25 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Arizona has 5½ minutes remaining.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Oklahoma (Mrs. BICE), who knows a lot about diversified energy because Oklahoma has the most diversified energy portfolio of any State.

Mrs. BICE. Mr. Chairman, I find it disingenuous for the other side of the aisle to continue to talk about pollutants over people, and here is why:

The Democrats are the ones that are wanting to pollute our environment. They are the ones that are supporting electrification, which requires batteries and rare earth minerals. Those same rare earth minerals that go into those batteries are being mined in China or other countries across the world with no regulations. They continue to pollute the environment, so to suggest that this bill is harming the environment is just ridiculous.

Since President Biden took office, Americans have felt the pain of skyrocketing energy costs. Gas prices have reached historical highs and are still well over 40 percent of what they were when he was sworn in.

Time and again, this administration has caved to environmental justice groups and held up critical energy infrastructure projects, canceling lease sales, and weaponizing the permitting process to cater to their political agenda.

This is why the Lower Energy Costs Act is so critical. This legislation provides important safeguards to lower energy costs and help streamline the pace of projects by putting in place deadlines for filing litigation on final agency actions concerning energy and mining projects.

The Federal permitting process is one of the most lengthy, arduous constraints that can delay projects for decades. I am glad to see vital fixes in the legislation, including my bill, the BLM Mineral Spacing Act, which removes duplicative environmental reviews and the need for Federal permitting when the Federal Government has no surface rights or only a minority share in the subsurface minerals.

If the Biden administration truly wanted to lower energy costs, the President's budget wouldn't have removed intangible drilling cost deductions. If these vital provisions were eliminated, it would not only result in increased energy prices, but it would also cost the U.S. over 250,000 jobs and would have a disparate impact throughout the Nation.

I am committed to cutting bureaucratic red tape, especially for our hardworking energy producers who have dealt with the stifling regulations from the Biden administration, and H.R. 1 is the first step toward lowering energy costs.

The legislation is a commonsense, all-of-the-above approach, and promotes American energy producers.

Simply put, we need to get back to what we do best—allowing Americans, like those in my home State of Oklahoma, to power our Nation with clean, affordable, and reliable energy.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. LATURNER).

Mr. LATURNER. Mr. Chair, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1, the Lower Energy Costs Act.

For the past 2 years, the Biden administration has done everything in their power to make it harder to produce energy here in the United States. Within the first 24 hours of being sworn into office, President Biden took executive action to kill the Keystone XL Pipeline project and ban new drilling on Federal lands.

When prices began to rise because of these misguided policies, the White House sold off our emergency oil supply and looked to Iran, Venezuela, and Saudi Arabia to increase production instead of turning to energy producers right here in America.

Just a few years ago, our Nation was energy independent. Now, we are relying on our adversaries for our most critical energy resources. As a result, families across America have faced record-high prices at the pump and soaring utility costs. It is time for a new direction.

The Lower Energy Costs Act maximizes production of reliable, American-made energy by streamlining the permitting process, investing in energy infrastructure in the United States, and reversing burdensome and costly regulations put in place by the Biden administration.

President Biden's commitment to Green New Deal policies not only puts our national security at risk, but also threatens our way of life in Kansas. The energy sector in my home State employs more than 150,000 hardworking Kansans, provides more than \$3 billion in family income, and delivers over \$1.5 billion in State and local tax revenue.

This legislation will protect our energy security, grow our economy, and create good-paying jobs in our communities. House Republicans promised the American people that we would take action to put our Nation back on the path toward energy independence and lower gas and electricity prices for hardworking families.

The Lower Energy Costs Act is a crucial step in making good on that commitment, and I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA), another member of the Natural Resources Committee.

□ 1715

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Chair, I appreciate the time here tonight to talk about this key issue.

I think, just as a reminder as we start, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are trying to make this bill into something that it isn't. The at-

mosphere is made up of only 0.04 percent carbon dioxide, so the hysteria, since it is raised from 0.03 for the last couple of decades, is really misplaced as we try to have an energy source that is reasonable and secure for the American people.

The Energy Information Administration predicts a 50 percent increase in global energy consumption by the year 2050.

Currently, America is the world's leading producer of natural gas. Petroleum and other fuels remain the largest energy source for Americans, and natural gas consumption increases globally are expected, as well.

We have, over time, the reality that no matter what the U.S. is doing, the rest of the world is going to be increasing its energy consumption.

You see on top here that all the renewables are great. They are only going to remain a tiny part around the world while we are contorting our economy to try to put our own selves out of business by meeting these ridiculous goals.

We must promote more domestic energy production and open more Federal lands for exploration and drilling. H.R. 1 is a tiny piece of legislation that will do that.

Give the American people what they want. Yes, they want clean air and clean water, but they also want reasonable energy. We know how to do it cleanly and efficiently.

We must not forget that, in the clean energy conversation, America's energy is cleaner than other top producers that will keep producing, like China and Russia. American energy is clean energy.

I am glad to see this bill making the reforms that are necessary to help on energy, as well as forestry, with the burdensome NEPA process that is delaying the U.S. Forest Service doing needed thinning projects, like in my district where they have had the Camp fire that burned down most of the town of Paradise and a million-acre fire known as the Dixie fire.

NEPA reform will make it where we can save our forests, have them be cleaner, have them not put so much pollution in the air that it even reaches the East Coast with smoke plumes, and, instead, have our wood and paper products coming from our forests instead of having to import them.

It makes a heck of a lot more sense to have a process to work through NEPA and others that still is accountable ecologically but is something you can get done so you can get ahead of the curve with better forest management and energy that is cleaner and that comes from our country.

I am glad to be part of this bill. I thank the chairman for running it.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Ms. HAGEMAN), another

member of the House Natural Resources Committee and the chairwoman of the Indian and Insular Affairs Subcommittee.

Ms. HAGEMAN. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of H.R. 1.

America must have accessible and affordable energy. Coal, oil and gas, and uranium are three of the most important resources we have to meet our demands. These resources are needed now and will be needed for generations to come, with demand only increasing over time.

The key question that we must address, then, is who is going to be producing our energy? Our fellow Americans, using our very own resources here? Or foreign and often hostile countries?

For the Republicans, the correct answer is obvious. For the Biden administration and Democrats, however, the answer lies not in using our own abundant energy resources and controlling our own destiny but in offshoring energy and mineral production to Third World and dictatorial countries that care nothing about protecting the environment.

The Biden administration and our friends across the aisle prefer to rely on coal from China and oil and gas from Russia, Iran, Venezuela—anywhere but here.

Their preferred energy policy is one that empowers and enriches dictators, despots, and tyrants; one that destroys our access to and use of safe, clean, and reliable energy that is found right here in America; and one that is designed to increase the cost and decrease the availability of the very building blocks of a civilized society, including food, housing, concrete, fertilizer, transportation, and manufacturing.

Their preferred energy policy is one that establishes energy poverty as the cornerstone of our society, where blackouts, intermittent power, and Third World conditions define our day-to-day existence.

In reality, the Democrats are reading from a fairytale, one in which we are allegedly going to be carbon-free by 2030, or perhaps it is 2035, or maybe we should look to 2050.

The only thing that the American people need to understand is that whatever the magical year is, it is beyond a point in time when they are no longer in power.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from Wyoming.

Ms. HAGEMAN. Their promise of outlawing gas stoves, air-conditioners that work, and the internal combustion engine and other technologies that make our lives better is beyond their expiration date as politicians. How so very convenient.

The House Republicans are ready to fight for American citizens and ensure that we have clean and abundant energy, and I rise in support of and support H.R. 1.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chair, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS), another member of the House Natural Resources Committee.

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Chairman, it was just this morning we were having a hearing and talking about Biden's bloated \$1.2 trillion infrastructure Green New Deal. One-third of that act went to actual infrastructure projects, and it looks like they are in trouble now because of inflation.

It is one of the main reasons I rise today in support of H.R. 1, the Lower Energy Costs Act.

Over the past 2 years under the Biden administration, we have seen gas prices that are up nearly a dollar after hitting a historic high of \$5 per gallon last summer. With energy demand only increasing, we can't afford the Biden administration's anti-energy agenda hitting our pocketbooks any harder.

This crucial piece of legislation will finally end the Biden administration's war on American energy production by prohibiting President Biden from banning fracking, repealing restrictions on the import and export of natural gas, and stopping Biden's \$6 billion natural gas tax.

This bill will also incentivize domestic mineral production to ensure the U.S. has the resources necessary to compete with China.

We will reform the National Environmental Policy Act to modernize and shorten the Federal regulatory process that takes years to get through. The days of projects taking decades to get off the ground are over. In the U.S., it can take more than 10 years to get a permit to mine, while our neighbors, our competitors, are much faster, further incentivizing our companies to export mineral production.

That changes today when we reopen the cleanest energy in the world, American-made energy.

Mr. Chair, I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 1.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chair, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, may I inquire again as to the time left.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Arkansas has 13 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Arizona has 5 minutes remaining.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. DUARTE), another member of the House Natural Resources Committee.

Mr. DUARTE. Mr. Chair, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1.

We hear today that it is not very interesting to discuss the Constitution to some. Well, let's see the Constitution in operation today.

We are the champions of abundance over here, and we want to show the American people, the working families

in America, what an abundance agenda looks like and show them our commitment to improving their lives with abundance.

We stand here arguing, in my opinion, with the lords of scarcity. They want to protect our forests until our forests burn. They want to leave American oil in the ground while gas prices go up for American working families, while energy costs in my district in California go over 25 cents a kilowatt, where working families in my district open the screen door in 105-degree temperatures because they can't afford to run their air-conditioners.

Yet, the lords of scarcity think we need more solar panels on more high-income homes, getting off the grid, leaving the cost of delivering electricity to the working families in America.

When we drill it in America, when we dam it in America, when we nuke it in America, when we frack it in America, we save American jobs and increase American families' affordability.

When we grow it in America, when we log it in America, when we make it in America, we create jobs and create affordability, and we do it more sustainably than anywhere else on Earth.

Over here, we are the champions of abundance, and we are here today to tell the American working family that there is a better choice for them. We can thrive. We can have affordability. We can have sustainability. We can have opportunity right here in America.

With H.R. 1, drill oil now, we can deliver American working families a better option.

Please keep talking about how silly you think the Constitution is. It is in play right now.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chair, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. NEWHOUSE), the chair of the Congressional Western Caucus.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Chair, I thank the gentleman for his leadership on this important issue.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today to talk about something that affects every single person, not only in this room but in our entire country. You need it to turn on the lights. You need it to drive your car. For my folks back home in central Washington, it is how you run your farm, your business, and your home.

Recently, the cost of that energy has gone through the roof. For years now, the Biden administration has been telling the Nation that global markets are complex and that there are dynamics that are out of our control that contributed to the highest gas prices since 2008 and spiking global oil prices.

We know better. This administration has effectively shut down all future energy and resource development, has created one of the most hostile environments for energy and resource producers, and continues to take actions

every single day to further their Green New Deal agenda. They should absolutely be held responsible for the burden now placed on the American people, who are struggling to make ends meet.

While it is very clear to me, just as I know it is clear to my constituents, that President Biden and this administration are failing to display the leadership America needs and deserves, there is a silver lining here. That is H.R. 1.

The Lower Energy Costs Act will finally get government out of the way of the American people. It will put an end to serial litigants stopping energy projects. It will cut through the endless red tape our producers face. It will unleash American energy to lower the cost for every American.

This is what we need, and it is what the American people deserve.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chair, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. EZELL).

Mr. EZELL. Mr. Chair, I rise today to speak in favor of H.R. 1, the Lower Energy Costs Act.

For the last 2 years, the Biden administration has implemented radical energy policies that have caused the price of gas and other household expenses to skyrocket. At the same time, this administration has forced us to become more dependent on hostile foreign nations and has caused us to lose high-paying American energy jobs.

H.R. 1 is commonsense legislation that addresses these problems. It would increase domestic energy production, reform outdated permitting processes, and support the production and processing of critical minerals.

Ultimately, this bill works to support the energy needs of hardworking American families who are struggling with the high prices created by this administration's policies.

As a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I am proud of the way H.R. 1 improves water quality certification by streamlining an outdated permitting process. Bureaucrats often weaponize the process by slowing down certification for projects that don't fit their radical agenda.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chair, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON).

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. Chairman, I spent 6 years as a State energy regulator, and our focus was always on safe, affordable, reliable energy because we knew that that could power American prosperity.

Indeed, this abundance of American energy that we have been talking about can be a huge American competitive advantage in an increasingly uncertain world. Unfortunately, we have

made it so difficult to do big projects in this country anymore.

If you need a strong piece of evidence, look at President Biden's unilateral canceling of the Keystone XL pipeline. Unfortunately, that is not the only piece of evidence.

□ 1730

It takes 5 to 7 years to permit an energy project in this country. It is an almost uniquely American problem. That same energy project could get permitted in less than half the time in countries like Canada and Australia.

H.R. 1, Mr. Chairman, is a huge step in the right direction. It prevents the constant relitigation of projects and of reviews that have already been settled. It moves the NEPA process into the 21st century by making sure that we have got an online permitting portal for projects. It creates deadlines for NEPA and other environmental reviews. Imagine that, a shot clock, a deadline, to make sure the government's work is done on time. Then, Mr. Chairman, it unlocks American energy by allowing the Department of the Interior to resume energy leasing and to repeal restrictions on the export and import of natural gas.

Mr. Chair, the abundance of American energy is a huge American competitive advantage. H.R. 1 makes that so.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. FEENSTRA).

Mr. FEENSTRA. Mr. Chair, in 2019, the United States became energy independent for the first time in 62 years. However, on his first day in office, President Biden destroyed American energy production by killing the Keystone XL pipeline and outsourcing our energy needs to our enemies.

President Biden's energy policies not only hurt our families at the pump, but they also threaten our national security. That is why I have introduced an amendment to H.R. 1, my Defend America's Rural Energy Act, to defend our farmers and energy producers from foreign adversary land grabs. My amendment would specifically prohibit China from buying farmland suitable for ethanol and biodiesel production, which is vital to the rural American economy.

Honoring our Commitment to America, Republicans will end Biden's war on American energy and fulfill another promise to the American people, and that is keeping American land in the hands of the American farmer.

Mr. Chair, I am a passionate supporter of H.R. 1.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BEAN).

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Mr. Chair, the question is: Is America's economy on the right track?

Eighty percent of Americans believe we are headed in the wrong direction.

In just 2 years, we have gone from being the world's leading energy ex-

porter to a dependent energy importer. Since January 2021, electricity is up 24 percent and gasoline is up 51 percent.

Mr. Chair, it doesn't have to be this way. The United States has the resources, the know-how, and expertise to be, once again, an energy independent nation and an exporter of energy. American energy is not the enemy; it is the solution.

H.R. 1, the Lower Energy Costs Act, is how we get America back on track. For too long, Mr. Chair, we have handcuffed ourselves when it comes to our oil and natural gas potential. I stand before you committed to unleash America's energy independence but also to unleash America's energy dominance.

Mr. Chair, a "yes" vote for H.R. 1 does just that.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. JACKSON).

Mr. JACKSON of Texas. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of H.R. 1, a commonsense piece of legislation that will provide the American people the relief they need from Biden's war on American energy.

As someone who grew up in the West Texas oilfields, I know firsthand how vital energy production is to our national security, and I know that energy security is national security.

Under President Trump's leadership, America reached energy independence. Gas prices were low, the economy was thriving, and the world saw America as not only an energy leader but also as an economic and military force that must be taken seriously.

However, the Biden administration has taken a drastically different approach. In the first few weeks in office, Biden waged war on American energy. Biden's assault on America's energy independence has eliminated thousands of American jobs, raised the cost of domestic energy, and left the United States dangerously dependent on foreign energy sources.

Americans are struggling to pay their utility bills and gas prices are at record highs, yet this administration continues to do nothing but make matters worse.

This legislation will not only alleviate burdensome energy costs for my constituents in Texas 13 but will do so for all Americans.

Mr. Chair, I am proud to support this legislation, and I urge all of my colleagues to support this critical piece of legislation.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BERGMAN).

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Chair, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

H.R. 1 will unleash domestic energy production and reverse the Biden-led Democrat assault on American energy.

Democrat punitive policies have led to record-high gas prices, limited supply, and unrelenting inflation. Folks back home in Michigan are yearning for leadership that has been sorely

lacking in Washington these past couple of years.

H.R. 1 will streamline permitting, open up new markets to export natural gas, and repeal billions in inflationary Green New Deal giveaways. H.R. 1 will also protect the land we live on, the water we drink, and the air we breathe.

Of great importance to me and my constituents is the provision continuing the longstanding ban on drilling in our Great Lakes. As the Representative for the district with the longest shoreline in the lower 48 States, including three of the five Great Lakes, I will continue to fight and defend our Great Lakes for future generations.

As we talk energy, I live in the middle of copper country. As this board shows, we need to control for our future the precious metals necessary for what we do.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chair, I yield myself the balance of my time for closing.

Mr. Chair, I thank my Democrat colleagues for their comments, both from the Committee on Natural Resources members and other colleagues that came forth to speak against the polluters over people act, H.R. 1.

Republican Members have produced an extreme piece of legislation. As I listened to the rationale today, there were four or five things that were repeated over and over again. It is an extreme piece and a high cost to pay for a speakership, but nevertheless, the rationale today was, as I heard it, patriotism. If you vote "no" for H.R. 1, you don't believe in America and you are not a patriot; you support China, Russia, Venezuela, OPEC, and communism. Unfortunately, that is a desperate lie and unnecessary in this debate.

The other rationale I heard: Let the polluters drive energy policy, production, and the safeguards that the American people need. That was one of the rationales.

The other one that struck me is collateral damage. Tribes, poor people, 40 million Americans, communities of color, once again, they get thrown under the bus to satisfy the greed of polluters.

The issues of environmental justice are almost eliminated and downplayed in this whole discussion. That is 40 million people. That is collateral damage that cannot be tolerated and should not be.

You ignore climate change. You blame other nations and ask Americans to accept a lower bar for themselves and give up the opportunity, as we always have, to historically lead in this world of ours.

This act is about taxpayer subsidies to a powerful and rich polluter industry that doesn't need the support. It dismantles fundamental public health, clean air, clean water, NEPA, environmental protections, and judicial review.

We need to remember that this act, H.R. 1, polluters over people, deals with

a very consequential issue, and that is the consequential issue of life. H.R. 1 is dangerous to life. The real true act of patriotism, I remind my colleagues, is our responsibility and our oath to protect lives, to extend the future, to deal with fairness and the public's right to know and the public to have a voice in their future. H.R. 1, the polluters over people act, undoes all of that.

Do we want to go back to the good old days when the rivers were burning, we were clear-cutting forests, when it was all right to admit wrongdoing and not have any consequences?

Those are not the good old days that people want to go back to.

If we are going to deal with the climate challenge and the climate action that is needed in this crisis, H.R. 1 needs to be defeated. It is the right thing to do, it is the American thing to do, and it is the patriotic thing to do.

Mr. Chair, H.R. 1 is dangerous and needs to be defeated. I urge a "no" vote, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield myself the balance of my time for closing.

It is a time for choosing. It is a time to choose whether you want to be with America or if you want to be continually supporting our adversaries across the seas.

H.R. 1 provides a solution to a problem that Democrat energy policy has created. Democrat energy policy means energy dependence.

H.R. 1, the Lower Energy Costs Act, means energy independence for America.

Democrat energy policy is a threat to national security.

H.R. 1 secures our country, secures our country's energy, secures our country's minerals, secures our country's food supply, and secures our country's future as we move forward.

Democrat energy policy is bogged down with their very permitting processes.

H.R. 1 will relieve those permitting processes. It doesn't undermine any bedrock environmental laws. It actually makes the environmental laws work. It allows projects to be permitted. Green energy projects, American energy projects, roads, bridges, transportation corridors, ports, navigable waterways, all of those things are being held up by the permitting process. H.R. 1 will be a great step toward making things happen in America.

Mr. Chair, I encourage my colleagues to support H.R. 1, to lower energy costs for Americans, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The Chair now recognizes the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure for 1 hour equally divided among and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member or their designees.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES).

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of H.R. 1, the Lower Energy Costs Act, which will unlock United States energy potential, benefiting Missourians and Americans nationwide.

Broadly speaking, this bill is important for so many reasons, from increasing domestic energy production to encouraging the production of critical minerals to modernizing the NEPA process for energy and other infrastructure projects. This bill does exactly what the title says.

Division C of the bill was produced by the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, and it focuses on streamlining and clarifying the scope of section 401 of the Clean Water Act to prevent its continued abuse in blocking energy infrastructure projects.

Many projects that require water quality certifications under section 401 are critical to our Nation's energy production, such as natural gas pipelines, LNG, and coal export terminals.

Division C of the bill makes clear that States cannot block important energy projects on grounds outside of the Clean Water Act quality standards, consistent with the intent of the original law.

Last month, H.R. 1152, which is encompassed within division C, was marked up and passed out of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

□ 1745

As included in H.R. 1, division C is incredibly important to lowering energy costs and boosting energy production while still ensuring water quality.

Mr. Chair, I thank two of my subcommittee chairmen, DAVID ROUZER and GARRET GRAVES, for their leadership in sponsoring this piece of legislation.

Mr. Chair, I would urge support of the bill. By passing H.R. 1, the House would support moving critical energy projects forward and support lowering costs for Americans through greater energy independence.

Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of clean water and in support of the Clean Water Act, and in opposition to H.R. 1, the polluters over people act.

Clean water is a basic human right—the health and safety of our communities and the success of our economy depends on it. House Democrats stand for clean water.

Last Congress, we passed a historic and bipartisan investment in our Nation's infrastructure through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The BIL included almost \$13 billion in clean water infrastructure upgrades and is creating jobs in communities across the country.

The Clean Water Act, passed in 1972, is one of the most successful environmental laws in our Nation's history. It

has protected rivers, lakes, and streams from pollution and contamination, ensuring that we have access to clean and safe water.

Section 401 of the Clean Water Act allows States to review projects that could impact their water quality. For 50 years, States have used this authority to protect their water resources, and it has helped them ensure that projects move forward only if clean water would not be compromised as a result.

These proposals that are in H.R. 1, to narrow the scope of section 401, are a misguided effort at permitting reform. By limiting the ability of States to review projects, we are sacrificing the health of our communities and our environment for the sake of expedience and profit.

I recognize the majority's interest in ensuring that permitting requirements are not insurmountable barriers to investment. I share the goal of speeding up project delivery.

Last Congress, I supported not only the BIL, but also the CHIPS Act and the Inflation Reduction Act. These laws showed what Congress is capable of when it focuses on addressing the real needs of American families. I want these laws and their investments to be successful.

However, to quickly put these investments to work, we need a robust partnership between the Federal Government and its State and local partners and Tribal partners, to address State, local, and Tribal requirements, and to ensure community buy-in before these investments are implemented.

To be effective, that process must build on a mutual trust between the parties because any effort to force that process often results in opposition, delay, and litigation.

Yet, H.R. 1 misses the mark by stifling local participation and buy-in, which will only result in these projects taking longer to implement.

In fact, State organizations, such as the Western States Water Council, believe that placing arbitrary and strict limits on section 401 application review times and processes will require the States "to issue an increased number of denials, due to inflexible deadlines that do not accommodate State public engagement laws or allow sufficient time to gather adequate information on project impacts."

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to reject H.R. 1, and reject the efforts to weaken the Clean Water Act and our Nation's other bedrock environmental laws. We must protect our water resources for future generations and for the health of today's communities and families.

Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. EDWARDS), a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Chair, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1, to

lower energy costs. United States energy independence is critical to meeting domestic demand, and growing needs from the rest of the world.

Rather than pulling out all of the stops to keep domestic production moving forward to meet this increased demand, the Biden administration has instead begged the OPEC cartel to boost their output, culminating in a failed appeal from President Biden to the Saudi Crown Prince in July of last year. To me, this is exactly why we are here in support of H.R. 1 today.

As a result of the historic increases in inflation under the Biden administration, the average American family is spending an extra \$395 to purchase the same monthly necessities as they did a year ago.

In November 2022, one in six families were behind on utility bills, and we are not out of the woods yet as natural gas prices rose over 14 percent just last month. This is especially concerning as 47 percent of U.S. households use natural gas to heat their homes.

The Lower Energy Costs Act seeks to reverse the troubling energy policy strategy that the Biden administration has carried out, and it prioritizes American energy dominance ahead of misguided Green New Deal-style policies.

Mr. Chair, I urge a "yes" vote on the Lower Energy Costs Act.

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Chair, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO).

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 1, particularly division C, which was introduced in the House as H.R. 1152, and was marked up by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure with strong opposition from my Democratic colleagues. The polluters over the people act let polluters off the hook for harmful actions and damaging impacts to our rivers, lakes, and our streams that our local communities rely on for clean, safe drinking water.

Division C is an attack on section 401 of the Clean Water Act, which is a key mechanism for States and Tribes to evaluate projects that cross within their borders and have an impact on their waters and environment for decades.

Section 401 has been a successful example of cooperative federalism, while preserving State authority to manage their natural resources. Section 401 has been a well-supported, effective tool since the beginning of the Clean Water Act, but the Trump administration found a way to make it a scapegoat for the failure of senseless and harmfully polluting mega-projects.

The provisions in the polluters over people act will tie the hands of States and Tribes seeking to preserve stream flow for their water supplies, to prevent runoff and water pollution, and to minimize impacts to flood-preventing wetlands. It goes against the Clean Water Act's rights of States to prevent, reduce, and eliminate pollution.

First, in California, this bill would have huge impacts. For one, limiting analysis to only discharges would mean the State would be unable to consider the impact of the whole project, such as increasing impervious surfaces, or considering downstream effects. Our State is trying to preserve every drop of water we can get. Yet, this bill would stop my State from protecting its water supply from the adverse impacts of projects pursued by out-of-State interests.

Second, this bill places arbitrary, and likely impossible timelines on the States to act on permit requests. Despite how complicated or huge the project might be, this bill will severely limit the time allowed for a State to review its impact. My friends across the aisle may not realize this, but this bill may lead to greater numbers of project rejections as the State is pressured to respond without the time to fully analyze the project.

This bill is another attempt to gut—really gut—the Clean Water Act and allow pollution and industry to act without repercussion. We must defend human health, our economy, and the natural environment, and oppose the damaging bill that will harm local communities.

Mr. Chair, I include in the RECORD a letter from the State of California, State of Washington, and the State of New York in strong opposition to H.R. 1152, which is the bill that became division C, H.R. 1.

FEBRUARY 28, 2023.

Hon. CHAIRMAN GRAVES,  
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN GRAVES: As the water quality certifying agencies for California, New York, and Washington, we write to underscore the importance of existing law in protecting state waters from water pollution associated with federally licensed projects. On February 24, 2023, Representatives Rouzer and Graves introduced H.R. 1152—Water Quality Certification and Energy Project Improvement Act of 2023, to amend section 401 of the Clean Water Act that would, among other things, revise section 401 to: (1) reduce the scope of states' and tribes' 401 water quality certification authority to apply only to the discharge to a water of the United States, rather than the whole of the activity; (2) narrow states' and tribes' section 401 water quality certification authority to exclude much of what is required to comply with water quality standards and implementation plans under section 303 of the Clean Water Act; (3) remove the states' and tribes' authority to ensure compliance with "other appropriate requirement[s] of State law"; (4) replace references to an "application" for certification with a "request" for certification; and (5) impose a time requirement on states and tribes to identify information needed before taking an action on a certification request, (6) make other changes to the law that introduce substantial uncertainty about the scope of section 401 for project proponents and state and tribes. Each of these changes would undermine states' abilities to protect water quality within their states and erode five decades of successful, cooperative federalism. We ask that Congress preserve the existing state authority in the Clean Water Act to substantively review a project's effects on water quality before a federal permit or license is issued.

*Background*

Under section 401 of the Clean Water Act, a federal agency may not issue a permit or license to conduct any activity that may result in any discharge into waters of the United States unless a section 401 water quality certification is issued, or certification is waived. The State Water Resources Control Board ("State Water Board") and the nine California Regional Water Quality Control Boards (collectively, "Water Boards"), [NY Signatory], [WA Signatory] are certifying agencies pursuant to section 401 of the Clean Water Act. In all three states, the most common federal licenses subject to section 401 are Clean Water Act section 404 dredge or fill permits issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and licenses for hydropower facilities issued by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

During the five decades since Congress enacted section 401 in the Water Quality Improvement Act of 1970, state water quality agencies diligently processed thousands of section 401 requests each year with little controversy. The vast majority of section 401 certifications were issued promptly and most section 401 certifications were granted, with only a handful of denials issued each year. Beginning around 2016, prompted by a handful of high-profile section 401 denials, some project applicants and industry lobbyists began claiming that states were "abusing" their section 401 authority. Such claims of abuse are not, and never have been, true. In the handful of cases when project applicants have alleged improper certification decisions or delay by state agencies, they have been fully capable of protecting their rights under section 401 through the traditional framework of administrative and judicial review.

*Section 401 is a cornerstone of the cooperative federalism principles enshrined by the Clean Water Act*

Cooperative federalism is a foundational component of the Clean Water Act. As set forth in Clean Water Act section 101 (b), "[i]t is the policy of the Congress to recognize, preserve, and protect the primary responsibilities and rights of States to prevent, reduce, and eliminate pollution" and "to plan the development and use . . . of land and water resources." Section 510 further specifies that except as expressly provided, nothing in the Clean Water Act shall preclude or deny the right of any State to adopt or enforce any standard or limitation respecting discharges of pollutants or any requirement respecting control or abatement of pollution.

The section 401 certification program is an embodiment of these cooperative federalism principles. A state certification is the mechanism of ensuring that a federal license or permit is not used as an excuse to violate state or federal water quality standards. As currently written, the language in section 401 acknowledges that states are in the best position to understand their own laws and that additional conditions may be necessary to ensure compliance with state law and applicable Clean Water Act requirements. As the federal permitting or licensing agency is often not an agency primarily tasked with managing environmental issues, the federal agency may in fact be reliant on the certification authority's expertise regarding water quality. To prevent a section 401 certification from becoming a rubber stamp, any revision to the section 401 language must preserve an expansive view of the cooperative federalism principles originally envisioned by the Clean Water Act and repeatedly affirmed by the Supreme Court. *PUD No. 1 of Jefferson Cnty. v. Washington Dep't of Ecology*, 511 U.S. 700 (1994); *S.D. Warren Co. v. Maine Bd. of Env't Prot.*, 547 U.S. 370 (2006).

*The Clean Water Act should continue to protect the whole range of water quality effects resulting from the proposed activity*

We strongly support the existing statutory language, which gives states and tribes the authority to regulate the potentially water-polluting activity as a whole, rather than being limited to a strict interpretation of effects from only the discharge, because regulation of the activity as a whole protects waters from the widest range of impacts. States should be able to protect water quality regardless of whether the pollution or other water quality impacts would be specifically attributable to a discharge or from some other aspect of the activity being permitted. States should be able to use the certification process to address impacts to groundwater, impacts to isolated surface waters, or impacts from non-point sources, all of which are likely not directly attributable to the discharge to a water of the United States, because these are water quality impacts that would not occur without issuance of the federal permit or license.

The problems with limiting certifications to the discharge rather than the whole of the activity would be particularly impactful on the states' ability to protect water quality during the decades long term of Federal Energy Regulatory Commission ("FERC") licenses in the hydropower licensing context. States and tribes must be able to fully address the water quality impacts of such activities as a whole during the 30- to 50-year term of the FERC license to reduce water quality impacts that, depending on the circumstances, may not be attributable to a point-source discharge, but result from the activity's construction, operations, and facilities. Common water quality impacts associated with hydropower activities include changes in turbidity, sediment, siltation, temperature, habitat loss, alterations to stream geomorphology, dissolved oxygen, algal productivity and algal-produced toxins, erosion, barriers to fish passage, alterations to stream geomorphology, and reductions in stream flow. Each of these impacts can have profound, generational impacts on the state's water resources.

To prevent or minimize these potential impacts, states have imposed, or considered the need for certification conditions to protect water quality on project activities that fall outside the typical understanding of point-source discharges, such as requirements for minimum instream flows and ramping rates; temperature management; aquatic invasive species management; plans for gravel replenishment, large woody material placement and other habitat measures; reservoir operation plans; erosion and sediment management plans; and monitoring and management of dissolved oxygen, mercury, pesticides, and other constituents of concerns. Previously issued certifications have typically included management, monitoring, and reporting measures to ensure compliance with water quality measures and to identify potential modifications if circumstances change. Revising the statutory language to contradict longstanding interpretations would introduce confusion and invite arguments about the nexus between the discharge and the impact, when a state or tribe's focus should more appropriately be on all water quality impacts resulting from the project. Introducing the concept of whether the activity will "directly result" in a discharge in subsection (a)(1) and (a)(4) would inject additional uncertainty and potentially further limit the certifying authority's ability to protect water quality.

Although the states would rely on their state authority to continue to preserve robust protection of water quality whenever

possible, state authority would not be an available remedy where state law is preempted by federal law. Because the Federal Power Act preempts the field of hydropower regulation absent an express exception to preemption, and FERC project licenses are valid for a fixed period of up to 50 years, water quality certifications for FERC license applications provide the states with a singular opportunity to ensure compliance with the state's water quality standards and other requirements. If the states' ability to regulate FERC licensed projects to the same extent that it has been able to for decades is significantly weakened, other, non-FERC projects would be subject to more stringent requirements to compensate for the failure of FERC-licensed projects to contribute what would otherwise be their allocated responsibility.

*The Clean Water Act should continue to authorize certifications to implement water quality standards and implementation plans adopted or approved under section 303 of the Clean Water Act*

Under section 401 of the Clean Water Act a water quality certification implements the applicable provisions of sections 301, 302, 303, 306 and 307 of the Clean Water Act and any other appropriate requirement of state law. The most important of the enumerated provisions of the Clean Water Act is section 303, which provides for water quality standards and implementation plans. Section 303 requires development and approval of water quality standards, which consist of designated uses, criteria, and anti-degradation policies; establishment of total maximum daily loads, which allocate responsibility for meeting standards that cannot be met solely through compliance with the technology-based requirements of the Clean Water Act; and implementation of a continuing planning process.

In 1994, the Supreme Court upheld state authority to set conditions of certification to protect uses designated as part of the water quality standards under section 303. *PUD No. 1*, 511 U.S. at 700. The Court rejected an argument that certification is limited to implementing the criteria component of those standards. Consistent with the Supreme Court's ruling, states have made effective use water quality certification authority to protect water quality needed for commercial, tribal, and recreational fisheries and other important uses of state waters.

The proposed revision to limit "applicable provisions" of section 303 to "requirement of state law implementing water quality criteria under section 303 necessary to support the designated use or uses of the receiving navigable waters" could strip the states' authority to use their certification authority to protect the uses of waters of the United States designated as part of water quality standards under section 303. By inexplicably omitting any reference to federal requirements that implement section 303, it would also create substantial uncertainty about states' and tribes' ability to enforce water quality criteria, total maximum daily loads, and antidegradation requirements adopted by U.S. EPA.

*Congress should not remove the states' authority to require compliance with state water quality requirements*

We strongly oppose the bill's proposed revisions that would limit the certifying authority to ensuring compliance with only specific sections of the Clean Water Act by deleting the existing reference to "any other appropriate requirement of State law" set forth in section 401 subsection (d). Such a revision would disregard a state's right to impose more stringent water quality requirements and be contrary to the protective goals of



the Clean Water Act. As is accounted for and endorsed by the Clean Water Act, many states have state-based programs and attendant requirements that arguably or explicitly expand beyond the state's Clean Water Act authorities. The Clean Water Act expressly contemplated a state's authority to establish and enforce more stringent state requirements beyond the Clean Water Act. For example, certifications may include monitoring and reporting requirements that arguably go beyond ensuring compliance with specific sections of the Clean Water Act, and instead help determine whether water quality is being degraded or to shape the development of future actions to protect water quality.

We urge Congress to refrain from making an unwarranted intrusion into a state's authority to impose stricter conditions to protect the quality of waters within its borders. *Section 401 should preserve the certifying authority's ability to define the contents of a request for certification and create submission procedures*

The bill proposes revising references to "application" to be "request." Although the intention behind that revision is not clear, we support language that recognizes that the certifying authority may define the contents of a request for certification and create submission procedures. The state's ability to define what is required for a request for certification is significant because a receipt of such a request is the trigger for the beginning of the reasonable period of time for a certifying authority to act on the request. The bill proposes an addition requiring certifying authorities to "publish requirements for certification," but it is not clear whether this language is an indirect reference to a certifying authority's ability to define required information for applications and submission procedures. To the extent that "requirements" were intended to require the enactment of new state regulations, 30 days is insufficient time to comply with public notice and comment requirements for State Water Board adoption.

*Section 401 should not impose an arbitrary time limit on the certifying authority's ability to request information*

The bill proposes revisions to subsection (a)(1) that specify that by 90 days after request for a certification, the certifying authority must inform the applicant if any additional information is necessary for the certification authority to take an action on the request. As explained above, to the extent that the language requires the certifying authority to identify what, if any, information is necessary to submit a complete application for water quality certification, many state laws, including California's, do this. But the revised language may be construed as preventing the states from requesting that the applicant clarify, amplify, correct, or supplement information required in the application, which is permissible under state law.

For these reasons, we write to ask that Congress preserve the existing state authority in Clean Water Act Section 401 to substantively review a project's effects on water quality before a federal permit or license is issued, and protect five decades of successful, cooperative federalism.

Sincerely,

EILEEN SOBECK,  
Executive Director,  
California State  
Water Resources  
Control Board.

BASIL SEGOS,  
Commissioner,  
New York State Department of Environ-

mental Conserva-  
tion.

LAURA WATSON,  
Director, Washington  
State Department of  
Ecology.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. In this letter, the States highlight how this legislation will undermine States' ability to protect water quality within their States, and erode five decades of successful, cooperative federalism.

Mr. Chair, I strongly oppose H.R. 1, the polluters over people act, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Chair, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. BURCHETT), a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Mr. BURCHETT. Mr. Chair, I appreciate the work that the chairman and the committee have done on this very important piece of legislation.

Mr. Chair, I rise today to talk about why we need H.R. 1, the Lower Energy Costs Act. I can't think of anybody in this country, especially working folks, especially the people in the Second Congressional District, who I represent, that say to me: TIM, I need to pay more for my energy. They don't. They say: My energy costs are out of sight. We have to feed our kids. We have to buy books for school. We have to buy clothing for our kids. We can't afford these higher energy costs.

The Biden administration, unfortunately, and the Democrats in Congress keep pushing these Green New Deal-style agendas. Honestly, Mr. Chair, they just don't work. There hasn't been a new development in solar in over 20 years, and windmills are just what they are. The wind doesn't always blow and the sun doesn't always shine in east Tennessee, and I am sure that is the way it is across this great Nation. It is costing Americans way too much.

We are done with all this nonsense, Mr. Chair. H.R. 1 is going to end restrictions on importing and exporting natural gas. What could be wrong with that?

Why in the world are we doing business with our enemies, the people we continue to send money to? We have hundreds of years, by recent estimates, of gas in the ground that we could be getting out using safe and environmentally sound methods.

The burning apparatus now is so much safer than when this was first started, it is ridiculous. We need to fix this permitting process. We keep saying—and I have heard the White House say many times through their spokesperson—that we are permitting all these wells. Well, they don't permit the pipeline to get there. It is like we have a gallon of fuel in the ground and we are trying to pull it out with something about as big around as a needle point.

We have to process our energy projects so they can get off the ground in a reasonable amount of time. By the time we get to the end of it, the cost is

so high that it is very cost-prohibitive. We have to make the Biden administration resume the lease on most of our Federal lands and waters that they have restricted.

We have to roll back President Biden's \$27 billion slush fund for these Democrat special interest groups and these projects that amount to nothing but woke policy changes.

We have to stop the liberal States from abusing section 401 of the Clean Water Act, which they use to add a bunch of unnecessary red tape to every project they don't like. It seems like when we find a good resource, they put these barriers in place. It is just not right.

Mr. Chair, we need to focus on keeping Americans' homes heated and their lights on. Nothing should be more important, especially since we are forced to purchase it from our enemies overseas—the people that hate our guts. They love our dollars. We pay them and the next thing you know, they are burning our flag. They are saying things about us that aren't true. They are causing us all kinds of problems.

The best energy solution, Mr. Chair, above all, is the solution that we need oil, gas, and nuclear energy—like they are working on at Oak Ridge National Laboratory. It is not in the district that I represent, but it backs up to where I am. There are over 6,000 people who work there that live in my district. It is also home to Big Ed's Pizza, which is a wonderful place—I will just throw that in.

Mr. Chair, H.R. 1 is going to spur energy innovation at home, and I am proud to support it. I appreciate the great work that has been done on this issue.

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON), one more person who appreciates the most important natural resource we have, and that is our clean water.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Chair, the so-called "Lower Energy Costs Act" is an attempt by the majority to strip environmental protections fought for by Congress over decades. The current leadership wishes to allow broad polluting, strip limitations on greenhouse gas emissions, and remove provisions of the Clean Water Act that not only protect our Nation's waters, but also affect the clean drinking water of everyday Americans.

Division C, the Water Quality Certification and Energy Project Improvement Act, will neither improve energy projects nor streamline the water quality certification process.

□ 1800

This section guts the Clean Water Act section 401 authority. The previous administration tried to significantly limit this authority in the interest of preventing oversight and accountability for those who polluted water sources. Now the majority is, again, attempting to gut this critical protection

authority in favor of unclear, imprecise, and irresponsible policy, which would allow significant increases in water pollution without holding polluters accountable.

This issue is particularly important to the District of Columbia because we are entirely reliant on the Potomac River for our drinking water. Under this bill, the headwaters of the Potomac River can be freely polluted in West Virginia, jeopardizing the water source of most of Northern Virginia, all of D.C., and much of southern Maryland.

We are no strangers to this kind of pollution. Before the Clean Water Act, the Potomac River was rife with agricultural runoff, trash, and other pollution. But today it is a much cleaner and healthier river and used for all manner of recreational activities. This bill would jeopardize all the progress we have made for the entire Potomac River ecosystem.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Chair, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia.

Ms. NORTON. Under this bill, a project could threaten water quality, water supply, fish populations, or many other things, and D.C. and other jurisdictions would not get any say in preventing it. Polluters can act freely and to the extreme detriment of their neighbors downstream, affecting the accessibility of clean water.

Mr. Chair, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Oregon (Mrs. CHAVEZ-DEMER), who is a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Mrs. CHAVEZ-DEMER. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of the Lower Energy Costs Act, a comprehensive and commonsense proposal that would lower costs for Oregon families by unleashing American energy.

The Lower Energy Costs Act paves the way for projects that would directly benefit Oregon.

H.R. 1 would prevent the environmental permitting process for critical minerals, making it more efficient for Oregon businesses to manufacture scarce and valuable products like semiconductors.

From the smartphone in your pocket, Mr. Chairman, to batteries needed for storing renewable energy, it is unacceptable that the United States is currently so reliant on China for critical products. The pragmatic permitting changes in this bill protect our national security by reducing our reliance on the Chinese Communist Party.

These changes also create opportunities for public-private partnerships on energy construction projects.

Instead of doing business with China, H.R. 1 presents an opportunity for my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to

support good-paying union jobs right here at home.

The Lower Energy Costs Act would streamline initiatives like the Jordan Cove energy project, which would have been a \$10 billion investment in a natural gas project in Oregon.

As we work toward a carbon-neutral future, we must also recognize that the United States produces cleaner energy than any other country, including natural gas. A Department of Energy report found that natural gas produced in America is 40 percent cleaner than natural gas produced in Russia.

Energy prices and the cost of living have remained elevated for far too long.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1, which would help restore our energy independence, support jobs, and lower costs for hardworking families.

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. DESAULNIER).

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, I rise to oppose H.R. 1. H.R. 1 reverses our hard-fought progress for clean water, and it also severely undermines States' abilities to protect water quality under the Clean Water Act. Under this bill, States like California would have their hands tied in their efforts to maintain water quality for drinking, recreation, and protecting our natural environments.

California has always been a leader in clean water issues, and this bill is a direct assault on our efforts to counteract pollution and protect both public health and the health of the environment.

What is more, H.R. 1 will dangerously limit States from protecting their own natural resources and bodies of water. It will limit California's efforts to conserve water, which is especially important given the extreme drought that we were in and will continue to see in the face of changing climate.

Maintaining section 401 of the Clean Water Act is vital. My friends on the other side of the aisle claim the proposed changes in the bill will prevent States from hijacking the permitting process and preventing important energy projects. However, in the past 50 years, California State water agencies have processed thousands of section 401 permit requests without issue. Only a handful each year are denied. The States have utilized this section to rightfully protect against violations of their own State water quality standards.

We see this legislation for what it truly is: a giveaway to corporate polluters at the expense of our environment.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly oppose this bill and the larger movement it stands for. We cannot and should not roll back these bedrock environmental laws.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Chairman, I yield 5 minutes to the gen-

tleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES), who is the chairman of the Aviation Subcommittee.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Chairman, I thank the chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, SAM GRAVES, for his leadership on this issue.

Mr. Chairman, let me describe the situation that we are facing right now. The Clean Water Act, as has been noted, was enacted decades and decades ago. There haven't been changes that altered the way that States are able to grant water certification under section 401 of the Clean Water Act. There have been no changes that have altered the way that this act takes place.

Yet, in recent history, States have begun using the Clean Water Act in its 401 water certification section in a way that simply weaponizes it. The States' decisions in many cases to object to projects being built in their States have nothing to do with water certification.

I can cite example after example, including by some of my friends on the other side of the aisle, who may be in the Chamber, where their States have objected to pipelines on grounds that, again, have nothing to do with clean water. This is a weaponization that has occurred in just recent history.

All the amendment does that the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ROUZER) led in this case is it simply ensures that the interpretation of the Clean Water Act is consistent with congressional intent when this was implemented decades ago.

Mr. Chairman, let me give you a practical effect of how this has impacted communities and how it has impacted American citizens.

Years ago, they had a cold winter. It was a very cold winter several years ago. What happened was that these communities up in the Northeast had actually used these authorities and others to block pipelines from being built, so it prevented natural gas from getting to these communities in the Northeast.

Then, they began burning home heating oil in higher volumes. I remind you, Mr. Chairman, home heating oil has a higher emissions profile than natural gas. So, you just made one decision. By blocking pipelines, you became more dependent upon home heating oil, so it resulted in greater emissions or, said another way, greater impacts to the environment.

They ended up having low supplies of home heating oil, so they took it to the next level. These States called their good friend Vladimir Putin—I am not making this up—and had him bring in liquified natural gas from Russia to meet the demands from the Northeast.

Mr. Chairman, maybe my friends across the aisle want to defend the decision to have Russian gas coming in to supply American energy needs whenever we had American energy right there that simply could have been piped in.

Mr. Chairman, I remind you that, according to the National Research Council, pipelines are the safest way to transport energy. By putting something in a pipeline, it has a lower chance of a spill and has lower emissions associated with transportation. This is how you should do it. If you care about the environment, then you want to put energy in a pipeline.

Let me say it again. The chairman of the Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee, Mr. ROUZER from North Carolina, has an amendment to this bill that really returns the interpretation back to congressional intent and back to the way that this provision was exercised for decades so we don't have these ridiculous scenarios like I just described where we are preventing U.S.-generated energy and U.S.-produced energy from meeting Americans' own demands, which, of course, is cheaper, cleaner, and prevents these crazy scenarios where we are calling up Vladimir Putin and asking him to meet America's energy demand.

Mr. Chairman, even Putin found this amusing and was trolling the United States on Twitter and social media.

Do we really want to subject ourselves to this?

Let me say it again: If you care about the environment, then what you actually want to do is put the energy in a pipeline.

We shouldn't get ourselves in a situation like where former White House spokesperson Jen Psaki acknowledged that the production areas that were to be served by the Keystone pipeline were still producing the energy. They were still producing the energy. They were just transporting it through other means, which means truck, barge, and train, all of which, once again, Mr. Chairman, have a higher emissions profile and pose a greater threat to the environment, which I will also note was directly contrary to the justification that the White House gave on why they were shutting down the Keystone pipeline.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Chairman, I yield an additional 5 minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES).

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Chairman, I think that it is really important that we are all talking about facts here and that we are recognizing congressional intent and how this very provision has been exercised and used by States for decades and decades.

This recent weaponization to advance or advocate for these energy policies that are resulting—actually, Mr. Chairman, I remind this House that we have watched emissions go up under President Biden, not go down. I keep seeing this sign pop up on the other side that says “polluters over people,” and I am not sure what they are talking about other than perhaps describing some of the very energy policies of this administration that have resulted in greater

emissions, a greater threat to our environment, and, of course, unaffordability issues. We have watched as people have been pushed into energy poverty as we have shut down domestic energy sources.

I encourage, Mr. Chairman, that what we do, instead of getting into this emotional debate and bringing up topics and issues that are not relevant or applicable to the law, is that we stay focused on facts and figures.

Emissions have gone up under this administration versus going down under the previous administration. We have watched as they have advanced or advocated for policies like shutting down the Keystone pipeline and stopping the connection between Marcellus and other American energy sources to communities that are energy starved.

This is resulting in greater emissions in the United States. It is resulting in greater threats to our environment. Most importantly, Mr. Chairman, one of the things that Mr. ROUZER's provision does is it really helps to address the affordability issue.

We have watched as energy prices have skyrocketed under this administration because of their deliberate attempt, which they have said very candidly—they intend to shut down domestic energy production. They have been very clear on that, and they have been incredibly successful.

In fact, you would have to go back to the Truman administration in the 1940s to get back to the same level of acreage leasing for energy production that has been done under this administration.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly urge adoption of this legislation. I strongly support the amendment that Mr. ROUZER advocated for and Chairman SAM GRAVES is pushing right now.

Mr. Chairman, we need to stick to facts here and make sure that we are making policy decisions based on reality.

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Chairman, we know that this side of the aisle is not trying to shut down domestic energy production.

In fact, the Inflation Reduction Act made a major investment in clean energy production in the United States to expand the use of renewable energies and renewable energy production. That is one reason why I want people to vote “no” on H.R. 1 because this bill removes some of those incentives.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Washington State (Ms. STRICKLAND), who is another person who is strongly against this bill.

□ 1815

Ms. STRICKLAND. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 1, the deceptively named Lower Energy Costs Act. This bill will not lower energy costs, and it won't prevent price gouging because Republicans have no plan to lower energy costs.

Here is what it will do: It will increase the deficit by \$2.4 billion in

handouts to big oil and gas. It will worsen the climate crisis, and it ignores the future of our country's clean energy workforce.

Republicans are more focused on undoing Democratic accomplishments—which, by the way, have already created over 100,000 jobs—than helping the American people. Polluters over people.

This bill forces the government to lease government land to oil and gas companies even if those companies don't plan to use it. This bill will allow anyone to stake a mining claim on our public lands for less than \$10 an acre, even if they haven't discovered any minerals. After that, any mining activity, including dumping toxic mining waste, is considered the highest and best use of those lands.

My Republican colleagues will claim that this bill supports permitting. If you look closely, that simply is not true. The main barrier for getting permits approved is staffing levels. There simply aren't enough staff to get permits approved.

However, I have good news. Democrats have already secured \$1 billion in the Inflation Reduction Act for Federal agency permitting offices, which will address this issue and is expected to drastically shrink the timelines for permitting without sacrificing safety. The Republican bill fails to address these issues.

When Democrats were in charge of the House, we passed transformative legislation to lower the deficit, address climate change, create good union jobs, and actually improve the lives of the American people. We put people over polluters.

Instead of helping our constituents, this bill will weaken State and Tribal authority under section 401 of the Clean Water Act. This section was meant to protect communities and water resources by giving them a voice when projects planned to impact their borders. This bill, though, allows special interests to override what Tribal nations and States know is best for their own communities.

In the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, my colleague, Representative HUFFMAN offered an amendment to keep Tribal rights intact under section 401 guidelines, but House Republicans chose again not to prioritize the people.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Chair, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Washington.

Ms. STRICKLAND. Mr. Chair, I will remind my colleagues that these protections are meant to prevent environmental disasters. We see all across the country radioactive water spills, water crises, chemical pollutants seeping into groundwater and poisoning communities.

These catastrophes are not just tragic, they are preventable. It is the American people, especially

marginalized communities, who are left with the consequences.

We can make bipartisan strides to protect American energy and security. We can promote innovation without sacrificing our environment or State and Tribal rights. Unfortunately, this is not what the majority has brought to us. I urge my colleagues to oppose this bill.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Missouri has 13 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Washington has 14 minutes remaining.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, one of the things I like to do in the Capitol is learn about the individuals who came before us and the wisdom and the knowledge that they possessed.

DANIEL WEBSTER served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1823–1827. He is considered one of the great orators in the U.S. House. He actually also served in the other Chamber. A very good quote of his went on to say, “Let us develop the resources of our land, call forth our powers, build up its institutions, promote all its great interests, and see whether we also, in our day and generation, may not perform something worthy to be remembered.”

That individual is the only individual that is quoted here in this Chamber, DANIEL WEBSTER, right up there on the wall above the dais. That first part is what says it all, “Let us develop the resources of our land.” That is exactly what we are trying to do so that we can be energy dependent on ourselves.

Mr. Chairman, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ROUZER) will manage the remainder of the time for the majority.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. RYAN).

Mr. RYAN. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of clean water and in opposition to H.R. 1.

I proudly represent New York’s Hudson Valley, the birthplace of the modern environmental movement.

In 1962, community members fought back against a massive, dirty power plant on Storm King Mountain, overlooking my alma mater at West Point, that would have pumped toxic chemicals into our Hudson River.

Ultimately, that fight led to the passage of the National Environmental Policy Act, landmark legislation that to this day protects and preserves access to clean water, air, and soil.

Tragically, my community has a long and well-documented history of big corporations dumping toxic pollutants, particularly PFAS, in our waterways. While there are many reasons I oppose this bill, I rise today to speak on this aspect, in particular.

You would think that keeping toxic chemicals out of our water and away from our kids would be a priority for everyone in this body.

Sadly, after reading this bill, that is clearly not the case. Rather than working to help families dealing with water poisoned by these forever chemicals, my colleagues are trying to pass legislation that will actually increase the prevalence of these toxins.

Every single day in my district, we have kids in Newburgh and seniors in Middletown who cannot access clean water. Asthma rates across my district greatly outpace the national average because of these very pollutants. The Hudson River, which provides drinking water for over 100,000 of my constituents, is still overrun with PCBs and PFAS. To introduce a bill that allows more PFAS and other contaminants into our water without any consideration of safety is an insult to my community and to the American people.

I will vote against this bill.

Mr. ROUZER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of H.R. 1, the Lower Energy Costs Act, which includes the Water Quality Certification and Energy Project Improvement Act. That bill is the one that I introduced alongside my friend and colleague from Louisiana, Mr. GARRET GRAVES.

One of many key components in this package, this specific part of the bill helps ensure development of our Nation’s energy infrastructure at a time when it is most necessary. This is accomplished by clarifying that projects subject to section 401 of the Clean Water Act are approved or denied based on water quality alone.

Unlike what my colleagues have been saying on the other side of the aisle that we are going to permit dirty water, et cetera, et cetera, if it is related to water, guess what, section 401 still applies.

The water quality certification process has been and continues to be weaponized by certain States to stifle important energy projects they oppose, particularly pipelines, for political reasons completely unrelated to water quality and outside the scope and the intent of the Clean Water Act. That is all this particular provision addresses.

Instead of fairly analyzing a project based on the Federal standards set forth by Congress, what has happened is States on the East and West Coast have increasingly weaponized section 401 for their own ideological purposes, again totally and completely unrelated to water quality.

Here are some examples: In my home State of North Carolina, the Mountain Valley Southgate project was denied, not because of water quality but because the deciding bureaucrats hold an inherent opposition to the project as a whole.

Projects in Washington and New York have been denied due to noise and cultural resources. Nothing to do with water quality.

These are just a few examples of the weaponization of section 401 of the Clean Water Act statute.

The language that is included here in this package quite simply will end this abuse.

At a time when American energy production and distribution is under tremendous assault from some in this country, ensuring that America can build the energy infrastructure necessary to responsibly utilize our natural resources, unleash American energy independence, and lower costs for American families is a top priority that this broader bill achieves.

Let me put it this way: Low cost, reliable energy is fundamental to prosperity. It isn’t the only critical aspect necessary for a nation and her people to be prosperous, but it is awfully hard for a nation to be prosperous without it.

Low cost and reliable energy helps America to produce more goods and therefore put downward pressure on inflation, and, boy, do we need all the help we can get. It will enable America to be energy dominant again, increasing American strength abroad. Put another way, it is critical to our economy, our food security, and our national security. That is why this legislation is so badly needed at this critical time in American history.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support the Lower Energy Costs Act, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Chair, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mrs. SYKES).

Mrs. SYKES. Mr. Chair, I rise today to put on the RECORD my opposition to H.R. 1, the polluters over people act, for the many unnecessary and unhelpful provisions that would jeopardize the health and well-being of Ohio’s 13th Congressional District and communities across this great Nation.

I find it hard to believe that the bill designated as H.R. 1, the priority bill that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are uplifting, would increase the national deficit all while endangering our communities by creating unsafe drinking water. That is the priority, increasing the national debt and making us less safe.

Everyone here agrees that we must ensure that the Federal Government is approving domestic energy projects safely and quickly, and we can all agree that the current permitting process leaves much to be desired. However, this process should not come at the expense of the communities who simply want clean drinking water.

I have been in Congress, Mr. Chair, for about 3 months, and this is at least the second time this body has rejected clean water. All of this in the backdrop of a train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, just about 40 miles from my district. We know pollution knows no boundaries, particularly no congressional boundaries. Whether it is East Palestine or Portage County where I represent, I simply cannot stand silent as polluters attempt to poison our water.

Further, Mr. Chair, I have listened to accusations of activist Governors who

would weaponize provisions of the Clean Water Act. For that reason, States like mine, Ohio, with a Republican Governor, Republican statewide leaders, and a Republican supermajority in the legislature should not decide how to protect the people of our State. Again, I am shocked about the total disregard of the people of Ohio simply to protect polluters.

Mr. Chair, my community elected me to find bipartisan solutions, not pollute their water or pursue partisan politics, and that is why I offered an amendment that would allow States to decide what they thought was best for their community, and particularly in a State like Ohio where there is a train derailment that has jeopardized the water quality and safety in Ohio. However, that amendment was rejected.

There is nothing partisan about wanting to make sure our children and our neighbors can drink a glass of water without worrying if chemicals like vinyl chloride are also being consumed. Time and time and time again, my colleagues are promoting and protecting polluters at the expense of our people, and I simply refuse to vote for this bill.

□ 1830

Mr. ROUZER. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Hawaii (Ms. TOKUDA).

Ms. TOKUDA. Mr. Chair, I rise today to oppose H.R. 1, which puts corporations over people.

Instead of focusing on the needs of the American people and combating the climate crisis, this bill is a shameful giveaway to polluters through loopholes and industry handouts.

In Hawaii, we view the environment as more than just a resource. It is a sacred responsibility, our kuleana, to ourselves and to future generations.

From ancient times, Native Hawaiians have sought balance from mauka to makai, the mountains to the sea, understanding the intimate connections we have to our precious, life-giving resources. This is the kind of future we should be striving for, one that promotes community and fosters responsible use of natural resources.

Everyone deserves to have a seat at the table when it comes to proposed projects that could pollute their water and air, especially underserved communities and communities of color, which have historically borne the brunt of industrialization, resulting in disproportionate impacts to their health and safety.

This bill does the opposite. In addition to shortening public comment periods, this bill would block lawsuits from anyone who did not participate in the comment period. Communities likely do not even know what projects are permitted, let alone the consequences of those permits, until well after the new proposed comment periods.

The responsibility should be on developers and projects to win support from communities based on their merits and through meaningful public engagement. Instead, this bill puts the burden on ordinary, hardworking Americans to fight for their basic right to clean air and water.

I urge my colleagues to do what is pono, what is right, and put our families, our keiki and our kupuna, above corporate profits and vote "no" on the polluters over people act.

Mr. ROUZER. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire as to how much time is remaining?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from North Carolina has 8 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Washington has 7½ minutes remaining.

Mr. ROUZER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I have listened to some comments from my friends on the other side, and I am just going to share some examples of how section 401 of the Clean Water Act has been weaponized. Some of these I touched on a little earlier, and some of these have yet to be stated, as far as I know.

In Oregon, a proposed liquified natural gas pipeline and export terminal, which would have had the capability to liquefy over 1 billion cubic feet of natural gas per day, was blocked by that State. The reason? After giving the project applicants the runaround, Oregon denied the certification, citing incomplete information given to the State.

Once again, that was a project that was estimated to have generated up to \$100 million in revenue annually, blocked, just like that.

Despite FERC finding that the project's plan for environmental mitigation and impact minimization was satisfactory, Oregon denied certification based on reasons outside the scope of the CWA, the Clean Water Act.

My second example here comes from a proposed natural gas pipeline's 37-mile extension that New York denied. The project would have added enough additional natural gas per day to meet the needs of approximately 2.3 million homes in a region where demand for natural gas is at an all-time high. Additionally, the project would add an estimated \$327.2 million to the region's economy.

Again, in this case, FERC concluded that any long-term effects would be limited to air quality and noise and that all project effects would be reduced to less than significant levels.

Once again, the State forced the project applicants to come back multiple times with more documents, continuing to move the goalposts each time.

When the State finally gave a straight reason for denying the project, they nominally cited "indirect effects on water resources," but none of these were provisions of the Clean Water Act section 401.

Those are just a couple of examples of how water quality wasn't even an

issue. It was other aspects. They were just using the loopholes in the statute to achieve their end.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Chair, I yield myself the balance of my time. H.R. 1, the bill before us today, is permitting reform in name only, putting polluters who want to fast-track special projects ahead of the public's interests. It includes unnecessary and unwarranted giveaways to fossil fuel and mining industries, and this polluters over people act also repeals historic investment in clean energy and climate change investments passed by the previous Congress.

I agree with the administration's statement on this bill, which called for working in a bipartisan manner to address lowering energy costs and working in a bipartisan manner to reform the permitting process and to address our energy challenges.

I know my colleagues want to speed up project delivery, and I share that goal, but it is not going to be achieved through H.R. 1.

In the last Congress, the House and Senate reached a historic agreement to restore, upgrade, and advance our Nation's interconnected infrastructure networks through the bipartisan infrastructure law, including major investments in improving clean water infrastructure.

A "yes" vote on H.R. 1 begins to pull back on our ability to maintain the promise of those investments. I urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to consider what real bipartisan work on permitting reform would look like.

Mr. Chair, I ask my colleagues to vote "no" on H.R. 1, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROUZER. Mr. Chairman, passage of H.R. 1 is critical for boosting our domestic energy production and lowering energy costs for all Americans.

I thank Majority Leader SCALISE for his leadership on this bill, as well as the chairman of the Energy and Commerce and Natural Resources Committees and our own chairman, SAM GRAVES, of Transportation and Infrastructure.

As has been stated, this bill contains many provisions to help streamline the permitting process for energy projects, allowing America to unleash its domestic energy potential.

I am particularly proud of division C of H.R. 1, which passed out of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, that will stop States from using section 401 of the Clean Water Act as an excuse to block critical energy projects.

Mr. Chairman, I urge support of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROUZER. Mr. Chair, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr.

LAMALFA) having assumed the chair, Mr. LAWLER, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1) to lower energy costs by increasing American energy production, exports, infrastructure, and critical minerals processing, by promoting transparency, accountability, permitting, and production of American resources, and by improving water quality certification and energy projects, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

**THE BUDGET MESSAGE OF THE  
PRESIDENT—MESSAGE FROM  
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED  
STATES (H. DOC. NO. 118-3)**

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAWLER) laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed:

*To the Congress of the United States:*

When I took office 2 years ago, COVID-19 was raging and our economy was reeling. Millions of workers had lost their jobs, hundreds of thousands of businesses closed, supply chains were snarled, and schools were still shuttered. Families across the Nation were feeling real pain. But today, 230 million Americans have been vaccinated. We have created a record 12 million jobs, and unemployment is at a more than 50-year low, with near-record lows for Black and Latino workers and women. Wages are rising, inflation is slowing, manufacturing is booming, and our economy is growing. More Americans have health insurance than ever before, and a record 10 million Americans have applied to start a small business—each application an act of hope. Our economic plan for the Nation is working, and American families are starting to have a little more breathing room.

I ran for President to rebuild our economy from the bottom up and middle out, not from the top down—because when the middle class does well, the poor have a ladder up and the wealthy still do well. We all do well. For too long, though, the backbone of America, the middle class, has been hollowed out. Too many American jobs were shipped overseas. Unions were weakened. Once-thriving cities and towns have become shadows of what they were. My economic vision is about investing in those places and people who have been forgotten. That is what we have done in these historic past 2 years.

Together, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, CHIPS and Science Act, and Inflation Reduction Act are among the most significant public investments in our Nation's history, expected to draw more than \$3.5 trillion in public and private funding for infrastructure and

industries of the future—including clean energy. It is simple: you cannot be the number one economy in the world unless you have the best infrastructure in the world. So we are finally rebuilding our roads, bridges, railways, ports, airports, water systems, and more to keep our people safe, our goods moving, and our economy growing. We have already announced over 20,000 projects and awards, creating tens of thousands of good-paying union jobs while requiring that all construction materials are made in America. Americans everywhere can take pride in seeing shovels in the ground for that work.

Meanwhile, the CHIPS and Science Act is making sure America once again leads the world in developing and manufacturing the semiconductors that power everything from cellphones to cars. The United States invented those chips, and it is time that we make them at home again so our economy never again relies on chips manufactured abroad. Private companies have already pledged \$300 billion in new investments in American manufacturing, many thanks to this law, and they are breaking ground on facilities that will employ tens of thousands of Americans with good jobs and breathe new life into communities across the United States.

At the same time, we are taking on powerful special interests to cut costs for working families—for example, lowering healthcare and prescription drug costs by extending Affordable Care Act subsidies and capping insulin prices and out-of-pocket drug costs for seniors on Medicare. The Inflation Reduction Act also gives Medicare the power to negotiate drug prices, lowering prices for Americans and saving taxpayers billions of dollars a year. It makes the world's most significant investment in fighting the existential threat of climate change—lowering families' utility bills, building cleaner and more resilient water systems, investing in rural communities, and leading the world to a clean energy economy.

Throughout, we have delivered on our commitment to fiscal responsibility, cutting the deficit by more than \$1.7 trillion in the first 2 years of my Administration—the largest reduction in American history. I have signed into law additional deficit reduction by finally making the wealthy and corporations pay their fair share, including with a new 15 percent minimum tax on billion-dollar corporations, many of which had been paying zero in taxes. We have also stood firm in our commitment to not raise taxes on anyone earning less than \$400,000 a year.

Now, it is time to finish the job, building on the ambitious progress we have made with new investments in America's future. My 2024 Budget is a blue-collar blueprint to rebuild America in a fiscally responsible way that leaves no one behind. The Budget continues lowering costs for families—

with new measures to expand health coverage, cap prescription drug costs, invest in quality child care, build affordable housing, reduce home energy bills, make college more affordable, and more. This Budget protects and strengthens Social Security and Medicare—lifelines that tens of millions of seniors have paid into their whole lives with every paycheck so they can retire with dignity. It rejects any cuts to these programs, extends the solvency of the Medicare Trust Fund by at least 25 years, and invests in service delivery so that seniors and people with disabilities can access the benefits they have earned. This Budget also keeps growing our economy by investing in the foundation of its strength: the American people. That means helping families by providing paid family and medical leave and restoring the full Child Tax Credit, which cut child poverty in half in 2021 to the lowest level in history. It means expanding small business loans; standing up for workers and their fundamental right to organize; investing in science and innovation; expanding access to preschool; and improving pathways to community college, career-connected high schools, and other high-quality job training. It also means working hard to make our communities safer, expanding access to mental healthcare, ending cancer as we know it, and much more.

In addition, this Budget cements our commitment to confronting global challenges and keeping America safe. It outlines crucial investments to out-compete China globally and to continue support for Ukraine in the face of unprovoked Russian aggression. It also continues our work to restore America's global leadership—reviving key alliances and partnerships, strengthening our military, fostering democracy and human rights, protecting global health, honoring our veterans, fixing our immigration system at home, and advancing cybersecurity through implementation of the National Cybersecurity Strategy I just signed.

Importantly, my Budget does all of this while lowering deficits by nearly \$3 trillion over the next decade. We more than fully pay for these investments in our future by asking the wealthy and big corporations to pay their fair share. We propose a billionaire minimum tax, requiring the wealthiest Americans to pay at least 25 percent on all of their income, including appreciated assets—because no billionaire should ever pay a lower tax rate than a school teacher or a firefighter. This Budget also proposes quadrupling the tax on corporate stock buybacks, so companies invest more in production to improve quality and lower prices, and less in buybacks that only benefit shareholders and CEOs. This Budget closes tax loopholes for the wealthy and cracks down on tax cheats, and it once again ensures that no one earning less than \$400,000 a year will pay a penny more in new taxes, period.